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A
HISTORY
OF THE
R E F O R M A T I O N
ON
THE CONTINENT.

By GEORGE WADDINGTON, D.D.,

DEAN OF DURHAM,

AND AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

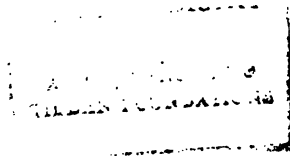
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ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

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P. 89, l. 1.—After *to*, insert “people summoned by.”

P. 207, l. 25.—For 1526, read 1525.

P. 262, l. 1.—“That sacred right of private judgment, &c.” It is not literally true that the Protestants at Spires asserted that right directly, or in its broadest sense. But they pleaded very loudly for the rights of “conscience;” for instance: “*Neque quicquam se agere aut intendere, quam quod conscientiæ suæ qua convicti sunt ipsoque Deo debeant;*” and again: “*Sibi itaque concilium imperare non posse, ut a sententia sua, quam conscientiæ ductu sequantur, discedant.*” Thus, members of the Diet, in Diet, pleaded their individual consciences as reason sufficient for refusing obedience to the edicts of the Diet. But they intended to say, perhaps: “We princes will not subject our consciences to the ordinances of other princes, but we will subject the consciences of our subjects to our own.” This may have been their secret meaning, though they then expressed nothing to that effect. Such, however, was far from being the interpretation which Luther placed on the asserted “rights of conscience.” He extended them to the subject, as well as to the Sovereign; and in his remarks upon this very edict he declared; “that a prince had not the right of compelling his subjects to restore abuses which they, acting from conscience and not by compulsion, had abolished. *Jus non est electori, ut subditos ad restabiliendos abusos vi cogat, quos illi pro sua conscientia et injussi abrogarunt.*” Surely this principle in its most obvious consequences recognised the right of conscience as universal. It is not here a question how well, or how ill, Luther conformed to it in practice.

P. 265, l. 18.—“When founded in religion.” I think that the following distinction may be observed between the spirit which animated the Reformers and their opponents in this contest. That of the former was more a religious, that of the latter more an ecclesiastical zeal. The former were contending for their faith, the latter for their church. The

one party was inflamed by a hearty devotion founded on the deepest convictions, and appealing to the promises and terrors of the world to come. The other thought more of this world—power, wealth, dignity, jurisdiction, and such matters. The name of religion was indeed pleaded alike by both ; but the feeling, the passion, at least during all the earlier struggles, was almost entirely with the innovators.

These explanatory remarks may serve to obviate an objection which might be made to the passage in the text, that the convictions of the papistical part of the Diet were no less founded in religion than those of the Protestants.

HISTORY

OF THE

REFORMATION.

CHAPTER XVII.

LUTHER AT WITTEMBERG.

The moderate conduct of Frederick—Luther's second letter—motives of his return—his proceedings—his seven sermons—their subjects, with extracts—the feelings of his audience and the character of his eloquence—effects of his preaching—retreat of Carlstadt—probable character of that reformer—mutual recriminations between him and Luther—the motives of both may have been good—interview between Luther and the prophets of Zwickau—he rejects them with rebukes, and they leave the city—his tract against the Pope and Bishops—its extreme and even impolitic violence—quotations—the bull of Luther—visitation of the Bishop—tract on the “Necessity of avoiding Human Doctrine”—some delicate subjects handled with little discretion—“Discourse on the Conjugal Life”—“Letter to the Bohemians”—his Translation of the New Testament—criticised by Emser—version of Emser—patronised by the princes—complaint and consolation of Luther—his treatise “On the Secular Power”—some principles contained in it—quotations—his reply to Henry VIII.—the points on which he chiefly dwells—principle of the right of private interpretation—extremely attractive to the people, and useful to Luther—the violence of his language—how far it did him harm—how he justified it—and how far with reason—upon the whole it probably served his cause.

THE effect which Luther's communication produced upon the mind of Frederick was not injurious either to his safety or his cause. That prince was not offended by the independent expressions of his subject, because he perceived the conviction from which they proceeded; and he had in his own mind a corresponding feeling

which, though much feebler, enabled him to understand and respect a superior virtue. He uttered no complaint; he vented no reproach; he imposed no other restriction, than a prohibition to preach in the great church, where the late disorders had occurred. But to guard himself against the charge of connivance, with which he was certain to be assailed by the papal party, he required a second letter from Luther, so indited, as to prove that the return of the latter was a spontaneous and unauthorised act.

Luther acquiesced without hesitation.* In a composition which is still extant, he exculpated his prince from any share in a proceeding which he admitted to be daring, but asserted to be necessary. He then justified it on three principal grounds. 1. He pleaded the numerous prayers and solicitations which had reached him from the church and people of Wittenberg. 2. He declared that, during his absence, Satan had made so violent an inroad upon his flock, attested by such universal clamour and tumult, that his writings were no longer sufficient to defeat it. "I must be there, living, present, speaking, hearing; I must act—I must act with them, over them, for them. My conscience will endure no longer interval or delay."† 3. He expressed apprehensions lest some terrible sedition should arise in Germany, through which the whole nation would

* In a letter to Spalatin, of March 12, he did indeed express his objection to being obliged to address the Emperor "*mein allernädigster herr*," as being gross and notorious hypocrisy. "Yet would I rather sustain ridicule and the charge of insincerity, than resist the weakness of the prince. . . But I have indeed a wonderful detestation for falsehood (*ego fucos mire odio*), and I have already conceded so much to those men, that it is time at last to speak with freedom." (No. 366.)

† "*Necesse est me vivum, præsentem, loquentem, audientem ibi agere, adesse, præesse, prodesse.*"

expiate its contempt and ingratitude for the benefits of God.

“We perceive with what approbation and eager joy the Gospel is received by most; yet are there those among the people who accept this blessing with a carnal view; they see the truth with their eyes wide open, and yet turn it to no good use. And these are further inflamed by the manifest violence of another party, which advances fiercely to quench the holy light, and thus exasperates more and more the minds of men, and sounds the trumpet of sedition. And this they seem to do with the very intent to bring ruin upon themselves, or certainly upon their posterity; and this is through God's ordinance for their chastisement. I had no other object in my writings than to break down the ecclesiastical tyranny, and this I have accomplished. But I now perceive that the Lord has still farther designs, and that He is about to accomplish that which He fulfilled at Jerusalem, when He altogether overthrew the political, as well as the ecclesiastical, constitution, because it was stained by the persecution of the Gospel and other acts of fury. For it is lately that I have come to the knowledge of this truth, that not only the ecclesiastical and spiritual power, but also the political and civil, must yield, either with a good grace or a bad one, to the authority of the Gospel. The historical records of the Bible all manifestly declare this.

“Since, then, God requires, by his prophet Ezekiel, that we oppose ourselves, as it were a wall, in defence of the people, I have thought it necessary, in co-operation with my friends, by teaching, admonition, exhortation, to avert or at least to defer, as far as lies in our power, the wrath and judgment of God. To this end, in spite of the ridicule of my enemies, I shall do all that may

seem to me profitable. For I do not fear to assert, and I wish you too to be well assured of this—that in the councils of heaven it is ordered far otherwise than in the decrees of the Regency of Nuremberg;* and we shall presently see that those, who now believe that they have devoured the Gospel, have not yet so much as said grace before their feast.”

This letter sufficiently reveals the double motive by which Luther was irresistibly impelled to resume at any personal risk his proper position at the helm of the Reformation—to repress the rashness of intemperate friends, and to resist the exertions of avowed enemies. He was as fearful of the abuse of Christian liberty, as zealous against the bondage of Rome. He was not more eager for the inward diffusion of spiritual light, than averse from any premature invasion of the externals of the church. Nor would he deign to purchase temporary popularity by yielding to the injudicious inclinations of the multitude. He scorned to flatter the errors either of a prince or of a people.

He returned on the 6th of March, and was received with sincere demonstrations of joy and affection. He instantly availed himself of these feelings, and lost not a moment in striking his first blow against the indiscretion of the zealots of his own party. Carlstadt had occasioned some excesses; he had committed too some absurdities, which at the actual crisis were almost equally mischievous. He had excited the youthful students and the ignorant populace to acts of violence. Professing

* Frederick objected to two or three strong expressions in this letter, to this among the rest, and desired Luther to soften them. He obeyed. But the original letter is that which is published in his works. Tom. ii. fol. 515.

the same devotion to the Gospel* which Luther professed he carried it into an indiscriminate contempt for all other learning; he inspired that principle into others, and acted upon it himself. Great confusion in notions and in discipline was beginning to prevail, and many parents had withdrawn their children from the University.

Luther immediately ascended the pulpit, and delivered seven sermons, on seven following days, to large multitudes of devoted hearers. In the *first*, after expounding the peculiar doctrines of religion, he proceeded to speak of the excellence of charity: how faith divested of that was no better than an image of faith, a mere unsubstantial reflection; how the exercise of charity and forbearance was necessary towards the infirm in faith; how all rashness and violence was a sin against charity. He then declared, that the abrogation of private masses was in itself requisite, but that the fault was in the manner. The change should have been effected, not by impetuous outrage, but after deep and serious prayer, and with the consent of the civil authorities. In the *second*, he argued against all compulsion whether in faith or worship, and advocated the gradual operation of instruction and persuasion. "I will preach, I will speak, I will write, but I will never carry matters by violence."† In the *third* and *fourth* he deplored the impious abuse of images, which seemed almost to justify their entire abolition; nevertheless he preferred that

* His text was Matt. xi. 25. "I thank thee, Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them even unto babes."

† In a warning to Christians, written at Wartburg, he had expressed the same opinions. "Aufruhr hat keine vernunft und gebt gemeinlich mehr über die unschuldigen, denn über die schuldigen. Darum ist auch kein aufruhr recht, wie rechte sache er immer haben mag. Darum hab acht auf die oberkeit, &c." Ap. Marhein. tom. i. kap. xi.

they should be tolerated, yet so as not to be made in any manner objects of adoration. He allowed monks and nuns to leave their cloisters, without offering them any compulsion ; fasting and partial abstinence he left in like manner to the individual discretion of the faithful. In the *fifth* and *sixth* he treated on the holy communion. He deprecated any violent change in the manner of its celebration ; above all, he enforced the propriety of much serious preparation, and the consciousness of a deep and ardent faith. In the *seventh* he maintained the usefulness of private confession, and permitted the administration under one or two kinds indifferently.*

All these various sermons were conceived in one and the same spirit : that the restoration of the Gospel must be the work of reason, not of force ; that the conscience must be persuaded, not assaulted ; and that all alterations in externals must be the consequence of inward regeneration and a general conviction of their necessity—so would they be peaceably and surely accomplished. “ I for example,” as he said in his second sermon, “ have done no more than expound, preach and write the word of God—beyond that I have done nothing. But that word, while I have been sleeping, while I have been drinking Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, that word has been working so strongly as to make the papacy stagger, as no prince, no not the Emperor himself, has ever degraded it before.† I have done nothing. It is the word that has operated and

* Another question was, whether the elements were to be placed by the priest in the mouth of the communicant, as was the Roman practice, or in his hands. Luther would have left this open, to avoid scandal.

† “ Verbum, se dormiente, aut cum Philippo suo et Amsdorfio Zythus Wittenbergicum bibente, papatum ita laborare fecit, ut nullus unquam principum, aut Cæsar ipse, tantum ei derogaverit.” Ap. Scultet. Ann. 1522. p. 108.

effected everything. Had I thought proper to reform by violence, I could have deluged Germany with blood. Had I been disposed to excite sedition, I could have put in jeopardy, when I was at Worms, the person of the Emperor himself. But what would that have been? The game of madness. I did nothing of the kind. I allowed the word to take its course. What are the meditations of Satan, when sedition is called in to effect religious purposes? He sits in the depths of hell and thinks how good for him is the game which the madmen are playing! But he is sick at heart when we leave the word, and the word alone, to work its way. For that is almighty—that imprisons men's hearts, and so surely fulfils its destined purposes. . . .”*

Of all the subjects that can be addressed to a popular audience the duty of moderation is the least attractive. It is easy enough to move the passions and to mislead the judgment; but to appease the storm, to allay the irritation that has been once excited, to substitute sense and discretion for fiery feelings and for the excess of virtuous indignation, especially when it proceeds from religious zeal, this is the hardest task that can be imposed on human eloquence. And indeed it can rarely be accomplished by any power of talent, unless enforced by great personal authority in the speaker. In the present instance, the whole community was intensely interested in the questions set before them. Religious matters held in that age an enthralling control over the mind. The immense power of the church, its universal and searching influence, the number, zeal and importunity of its

* Marheinecke, vol. i. chap. xi. Luther followed up these sermons by a little German tract on the Communion in two kinds and the changes introduced by Carlstadt, containing the same principles and counsels as his sermons.

ministers, kept it always present, always uppermost in every one's thoughts and feelings. It was a subject of indifference to nobody; and at that moment especially, the crisis of a most important change; on that spot, where the principles of the change originated, and its elements, yet imperfectly understood, were mixed in confusion together, the expressions of the preacher were watched with deep and universal anxiety.

Luther possessed great eloquence. It is not that he was a finished orator according to the rules of the art, or adorned by all those graces which are so persuasive with a polished audience; but he had many qualities and talents which gave a powerful effect to his speaking—a clear harmonious voice, great fluency, a ready and retentive memory, unequalled knowledge and command of his own language, singular force of thought and expression, much theological learning, much acuteness of intellect, and a general soundness of reasoning; all set forth by an energy and earnestness of manner which proved the sincerity of his purpose, and rendered his appeals to a popular assembly irresistible.

On this occasion there were circumstances which may have lent him peculiar animation. He had now begun to perceive that evils might arise from the abuse of his doctrine; he had learnt to tremble at the fatal consequences even of truth perverted; he knew that those consequences would be imputed to the truth, not to its perversion; and that the blame, if not the crime, would assuredly be fixed upon himself. Add to this the authority of his name, the integrity of his character, his courage, his disinterestedness, his devotion to the cause of the gospel and the people, the mystery of his late retirement, the dangers which he had incurred and escaped, those which still surrounded him and which at any mo-

ment might compass his destruction.* These and similar considerations doubtless contributed to give even unusual force to his exhortations. They were followed by the most complete success. Every symptom of disorder immediately disappeared; the city was restored to its former tranquillity, the university to its legitimate studies and rational principles; and Carlstadt, the unfortunate author of the confusion, overwhelmed by the predominance of a superior genius, withdrew not long afterwards from the field of his disgrace.

A few days after this triumph Luther wrote as follows to the prior of the Augustinians at Eisleben:† “I have offended Carlstadt because I have annulled his institutions; but to his doctrine I have only this objection, that all his exertions are made about ceremonies and things external, to the entire neglect of the true Christian principles, which are faith and charity: for by his preposterous manner of teaching he has brought the people to estimate and approve their Christianity by things of no value,‡ such as these—if they shall communicate in

* A letter written by him to Gerbelius of Strasburg about this time contains expressions to the following effect: “I am surrounded by no guards but those of heaven. My enemies are all about me, and they have the authority of the law to destroy me at any hour. Yet I console myself thus—I know that Christ is Lord of all, and that the Father hath put all things under his feet, not excepting the anger of the Emperor, and all evil spirits. If it seem good to Christ that I should be slain, let me die in his name,” &c.

† Ap. Seckendorf, lib. i. sect. 48, § 121. There are many similar expressions in a letter written by Luther to John Duke of Saxony on March 18, also cited and translated from the German by Seckendorf, *ibid.* addit. i. “Non ideo sumus Christiani, quia sacramentum tangimus, vel non tangimus, sed quatenus fidem et charitatem habemus. Libertas servanda est in conscientia et publicè predicanda; sed ferendæ erunt infirmorum conscientiæ, donec et ipsi intelligentiores fiunt. Hic errarunt Wittenbergenses mei. Recte docuerunt; sed non recte usi sunt doctrina; arte divites fuerunt, charitate pauperes, &c.”

‡ “Per has res nihili. . .” Were they, at least two of them, really

both kinds, if they shall receive the bread in their hands, if they shall refuse confession, if they shall break the images. This is the malice of Satan, who has introduced himself under another form for the ruin of the church. But it has always been my object to set the consciences of men at liberty from these perverse practices, and then would the thing fall to the ground by itself with the consent of all men. But he wanted to start up at once a new master, and by putting down my authority to impose his own institutions on the people.”*

This last imputation obliges us to compare the avowed principles and recorded proceedings of the now rival reformers; and in so doing we can scarcely hesitate to ascribe the praise of greater purity, of sounder discretion, of much clearer foresight, to Luther. The other was impatient and inconsiderate; yet some of his earlier acts had passed without disapprobation; and very lately, when he married and solemnised that ceremony with unusual publicity and parade, he had received the applause and benediction of Luther. “May God comfort him† for the excellent example that he has set, for the repression and diminution of the lust of papacy!” Now it seems that the celibacy of the clergy was one of the established practices of which Luther encouraged the immediate abolition, even by open practical disobedience. Again, the sale of indulgences, the celebration of private masses, were others; so that Carlstadt may well have been so far misled by those bold innovations, as to think it no unreasonable step to pass onwards to the demolition

matters so utterly contemptible? The people did not think so. “*Video et nostros irruere ad utramque speciem sumendam—cum interim fidem et charitatem nihil pendant. . .*” Luther to John Hetz, Canon of Breslau, March 25, 1522 (No. 372).

* “*Ille cupiebat fieri subito novus magister et suas ordinationes in populo, pressa auctoritate mea, erigere.*”

† Luther to Amsdorf, January 14, 1522.

of other evils of the same antichristian family, and just as strongly denounced by the same commanding voice. But in so doing he overlooked the leading principle by which the conduct of Luther was directed—that abuses were not to be extinguished till they were ripe for extinction, till they were ready to fall to the ground almost of themselves; that the use of violence in a good cause was only dangerous to the cause which used it; and that the gradual operation of reason, slow as it might sometimes be, was after all the only certain method of accomplishing a righteous purpose.

As to the motives of the parties in this difference, they can only be known to Him who searched and saw their hearts; but neither of them, unhappily, was free from the offence of disparaging the other. Luther, as we have seen, imputed to Carlstadt vanity or ambition; and a hasty expression is ascribed to the latter, which, if truly ascribed, might seem to justify the charge. Carlstadt, on his part, attributed to Luther the most despotical spirit—"he will have all other people enslaved to his authority, nor will he permit any one to write or to do anything except under his own dictation."* Historians, who commonly love to enter largely into such topics, have diligently repeated those recriminations. To me it appears, that the undisputed indiscretion of Carlstadt is argument sufficient to clear him from the suspicion of selfish motives, and to account for every part of his proceedings.† And in respect to Luther, if his interference

* In his work "On the execrable abuse of the Eucharist."

† On August 6, 1521, Luther thus wrote to Spalatin concerning Carlstadt: "There is great force of genius and learning in the writings of Carlstadt, but I wish they contained clearer arguments. His cause is excellent and his attempts laudable, but he should rely on proofs that are unanswerable. . . ." This was written before any dispute took place between them, and we may infer from it, what was no doubt the truth, that

was really judicious, if his measures were those best calculated to promote the success of his own work, if his conduct was consistent with his known principles and his professed intentions, we have no right to ascribe to him any other object or feelings, than those which he claimed. There is so much vice and selfishness in the palpable uncontested facts which are everywhere presented to us by the history of man, that we may well be spared the odious task of making inquisition into wickedness, where there is no sure proof of its existence. Since there are some who do sometimes act from righteous motives, let us avoid the very risk of defrauding them of the rare glory of their purity.

Among the anxious hearers of Luther were the disciples of the exiles of Zwickau; and we read that one of these chiefs was so astounded by his eloquence, as to declare that it was no human voice, but the speech of an

Carlstadt wanted neither cleverness nor erudition, but only that which gives to both of them their value—judgment. Compare with this the tirade of Melancthon written to Myconius after the breach. “Carlstadt first raised the tumult respecting the sacrament,—a man of savage disposition, of no genius, or learning, or even of common sense. He is so far from having any marks of the Holy Spirit that I never could observe him to understand or practice even the ordinary duties of humanity: nay, he has discovered manifest signs of an unholy turn of mind. All his notions savour of sedition and Judaism. From the first he embraced all the fanatical notions of the Anabaptists, when Storch tried to sow the seeds in Germany: he made the commotion about the sacrament entirely out of dislike to Luther. . . . There is not in his whole writings on that subject even the specious appearance of a probable argument. . . . What single expression is there in his whole disputation which indicates a pious way of thinking? . . . Moreover, a great part of his writings is taken up with railing. . . . I have written this for the sake of my neighbours, that, if they have the least regard for my testimony, they may beware of such a character; for though he cannot dissemble for long together, yet he has a fair outside, and possesses the arts of insinuation to a wonderful degree; but his temper soon breaks out. . . .” This effusion of party invective throws less discredit on its object than on its author.

angel from heaven. Stubner was absent; but when he presently returned to his flock and was exhorted to confirm and defend his declining doctrines, he thought it expedient to seek a personal conference with Luther and explain them to him. It was with great reluctance that Luther consented to this. But at length the day and hour were fixed; and Stubner, with Cellarius and one other disciple, appeared before the Reformer. Melancthon alone was present. Then Stubner expounded at length the whole tissue of fables and fancies, which he mistook for opinions. Luther listened with calmness; and when this exposition was at length concluded, perceiving that the absurdities were too wild and gross for serious confutation, he admonished the speaker to this effect: "Take heed of what you are doing. There is nothing of all that you have related which has any foundation in Scripture. These are at least but the devices of curious imaginations; and they may be the delirious and fatal suggestions of a false and fraudulent spirit."*

On this Cellarius broke out into the most violent phrenzy. With frantic voice and gesture, stamping on the ground and beating the table before him, he expressed his loud indignation that Luther should have dared to harbour any such suspicion respecting so divine a personage. Stubner replied with somewhat more calmness: "That you may know, Luther, that I am endowed with the spirit of God, I will tell you the thought which you are even now conceiving in your heart—you are beginning to incline towards a belief in my doctrine." Now this divination was singularly unfortunate; for it so happened that the subject of Luther's meditation at that moment was the scriptural sentence, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!" After this, Luther demanded a sign

* It does not appear that the distinctive opinion, from which they afterwards received their denomination, was very prominent among the pretensions of the original enthusiasts.

of the divinity of their mission ; and when they refused it, he refrained from any further expostulation, and at once dismissed them. They retired, menacing and boasting ; and when they declared the dreadful demonstrations by which they would prove their doctrine, he merely said to them, "That God, whom I venerate and worship, will easily prevent your God from accomplishing these threats." On the very same day they departed from the city, and consoled themselves in their defeat by heaping curses and execrations upon the head of Luther.* There is little further mention of these men in history. Of Stubner nothing certain is recorded. Cellarius, after suffering imprisonment in Prussia, is said to have escaped to Basle, and adopted more reasonable doctrines.

Having thus disposed of his injudicious allies, and of the still sillier enthusiasts, who would have associated their fanaticism with the cause of the Reformation, Luther returned to battle once more against its open enemies. Among these, as might well be expected, where the ecclesiastical discipline was violated, the foremost and most zealous were the bishops. Their principal exertions were directed to chastise the clergy who had married ; and against one of these the Bishop of Misnia proceeded to the last extremities. Luther's indignation was roused ; and then, as was his custom, not confining

* Camerarius. *Vita Philippi*, p. 51, ap. Seckend. l. i. sect. 48, § 118. Addit. Luther thus describes this affair in a letter to Spalatin, April 12, 1522 (No. 382) :—"Prophetas istos novos passus sum . . . Ego, quando ita pertinaces erant, etiam mendaciis manifestis deprehendi, et misera verborum lubricitate evadere molientes, ut serpentem antiquum agnosceres, jussi tandem ut miraculis probarent suam doctrinam, qua ultra et contra Scripturas gloriarentur. Illi recusabant miracula, minati tamen sunt, fore ut credere tandem iis cogerer. Spumabat, et fremebat et furebat inter hæc Magister Martinus (Cellarius) nec loqui jussus, nec interrogatus, ut nec mihi loquendi spatium faceret. Ego, dimissis, interminatus sum eorum Deo, ne miracula ederet, invito Deo meo : sic discessimus."

his attack to any particular offence, or any individual offender, he hastened to vent his wrath against the whole hierarchy. He published a German tract against "The Order, falsely called Spiritual, of the Pope and Bishops,"* in which he even surpassed his former denunciations. He dwelt on their ignorance, their avarice, the hopeless corruption of their morals. He altogether renounced their authority. He expressed his regret at the humility which he had shown them for the third time at Worms; and warned them that thenceforward he would not deign to submit his doctrines to them; no, nor to an angel from heaven. So long as I live (he said in substance) I will assail your enormities with increasing boldness. I will have no truce with you; and if you succeed in destroying me, you shall be still further from peace. As the prophet Hosea says, "I will be unto you as a lion, as a leopard by the way." It is my most earnest wish that you should repent; but if you will not, then must we war, till your iron brow and bronze neck shall by some means or other be broken.

After proceeding at some length in this strain, he rose to a still loftier tone; and in imitation of that pontifical arrogance, which he was so fond of denouncing, issued a sort of Bull of Anathema, a proclamation of proscription, against the whole body of the bishops: "Whosoever shall bring aid to this holy work; whosoever shall contribute life, fortune, reputation, to this purpose, that the episcopacy may be wholly laid waste and the episcopal

* "Wider den falschgenanntem geistlichen stand des Pabsts und der Bischöffe." In this work he contented himself with the title of *preacher*—those of priest and doctor having been annulled by the Pope's excommunications—adding at the same time, that should he assume that of Evangelist he would do so on the highest authority; since it was clear that he held the commission from Christ himself, and was ready to bear testimony to it at his last hour.

government extinguished, these are the beloved children of God ; these are the true Christians ; these are the observers of the precepts of God ; these are the foes of the ordinances of Satan. Or if they be unable to go so far, let them at least condemn and repudiate that government. But as to those who shall maintain it and offer it a voluntary obedience, they are indeed the appropriate ministers of the devil, and live in repugnance to the law of God. Yet (he continued) when I speak of their devastation and extinction, I by no means counsel that this should be the work of the sword ; but that according to the teaching of Daniel (viii. 25) they should be peaceably worn down, by the constant collision of arguments from the word of God, till they fall through universal shame and contempt."

It is not perhaps very easy to reconcile the cautious forbearance recommended in the concluding sentence of this " Bull" with the fierce anathema which precedes it. At any rate the enemies of Luther made no such attempt ; but, without at all noticing the explanatory paragraph, at once accused him of proclaiming a war of extermination against the whole order, and instigating the common people, by the strongest possible incentives, to engage in it. These representations were sufficiently grounded to have some weight with the higher classes, and to terrify the timid ; so that Luther, however popular his exhortations might be among those who envied the dignity of the mitre, or hated the very existence of the hierarchy, probably injured his cause by the fury of this production. The most powerful families in Germany were interested in maintaining the Sees, as splendid provisions for younger sons, and were consequently opposed even to their gradual and peaceful abolition. And the fear of seditious tumults under the banners of the Reformer, which was pretended by many and no doubt felt by some, furnished

them with an excuse for more decided hostility. Besides, it was the tendency of the work to throw the higher and lower classes into that jealous opposition, which is invariably injurious to the interests of both.

An order from the imperial regency, published in the beginning of this year, compelled the bishops to make a personal visitation of their dioceses, for the repression of the Lutheran irregularities. The bishop of Misnia, with the permission and professed support of the Elector, obeyed. But his attempts were so feeble, and his professional ignorance so conspicuous amidst the intelligence which freedom of thought was now diffusing, that he retired without any other effect, than to throw one additional slur upon the credit of his order.

The misconduct of some false reformers was far more mischievous than the zeal of this prelate. Several apostate monks, whose secret vices had polluted the establishments they had abandoned, now carried forth into the world their foul passions and dissolute habits, and cast upon the Reformation the scandal which properly belonged to the church of their education. On this occasion Luther published a German tract "On the Necessity of avoiding Human Doctrine." In this he repeated many of his arguments "Concerning Monastic Vows," and maintained the truth of his principles. But he deprecated their abuse. He declared that they were not addressed to those shameless converts, who made their religion to consist in the eating of eggs or the breaking of images, but to the afflicted and enslaved consciences of sincere but timid Christians. In this work the abominations which polluted the monastic life were depicted with so little disguise as to inflame the indignation of the papal writers against the indelicacy of the author. But his life was free from the mere suspicion of immorality; and the nakedness of his expressions only repre-

sented his own disgust at vice, and was intended to inspire his readers with no other feelings. We cannot fail, however, to observe that after his outbreak from Wartburg, he threw off all self-restraint, together with all fear, and deliberately stigmatised in the strongest and plainest terms whatsoever might be the object of his wrath, whether it were the tyranny of a prelate, or the impurity of a monk.

In the same year he published, among several smaller works, a "Discourse on the Conjugal Life," which gave occasion to many misrepresentations. He was accused of inculcating the obligation to marriage as universal and essential, like the love of God, the forgiveness of enemies, or any other Christian duty—nay, even of justifying, under certain circumstances, positive sin. These were indeed extreme inferences, suggested by party malignity. Yet it must be admitted that Luther treated those delicate subjects with a degree of indiscretion which gave an advantage to his enemies. And it would have been happier for his fame, had he found it consistent with his public duties or private feelings to abstain from any mention of them.

About the same time, in the July of 1522, he addressed a letter to the Bohemians, exhorting them to persevere in their revolt against the papacy. And in reference to one charge which was commonly alleged against them—the want of unanimity in their heresy—he consoled them by the example of their accusers, among whom differences and dissensions prevailed, to at least as great an extent. But those, which may be properly termed his controversial works, did not after all occupy the more serious portion of his time and thoughts. They were but the occasional explosions of his religious zeal; they were composed with great rapidity, and probably very few of them received the calm and mature consideration of their

author. In his Patmos he had devoted the larger part of his laborious solitude to the translation of the New Testament into the German language. He completed it there; and after it had undergone the more critical revision of Melancthon, he published it in the September of 1522. Such a work, proceeding from that author, at that time, in the excited condition of the minds of all men, was devoured with extraordinary avidity. It spread in a moment from one end of Germany to the other. It found its way, not only into the schools of the doctors and the mansions of the great, but to the hearth of the humbler classes; and by these especially was it embraced with simple and unmixed transport—since they at least were thirsting for the truth, and had fewer prejudices, and not any interests, to warp them from it. There were other translations of the Bible extant; four had been published during the fifty preceding years. But their style was so coarse and barbarous, as to repel rather than invite the most devout curiosity; while that of Luther was distinguished by a perspicuous and sublime simplicity, without example or resemblance in the German literature of that age—as if the reformer, in his holy design to set forth the noblest truths in the strongest and clearest expressions, had aimed to accomplish at the same time a secondary object; and while he purified the religion, to elevate too the language, of his country.

The rapid diffusion of this work awakened the deepest apprehensions of the papists—for they were in fact well acquainted, notwithstanding all their disguise, with the weak points of their system, or they never could have defended it so long. Emser published a German criticism on Luther's version, and enumerated fourteen hundred errors, which he had detected in it—and these, to serve the purposes of faction, he imputed to the wilful corruption of the sacred writings even more than to the ig-

norance of the translator. The version was not faultless; but the censures of Emser were almost innocent, because they were founded on the assumption that the vulgate was perfect, and that every deviation from that was an error. Yet even Emser was well aware that it was now too late to close that book against the people, and that the thirst which consumed them must be satisfied from some source or other. So he promised, when he produced his criticism, that he would himself presently publish another and a purer translation. In the year 1527 his version appeared; and it then proved to be no more than a faithful transcript of that of Luther, excepting only those passages which he had previously condemned.

Meanwhile many secular potentates, acting under spiritual influence, continued to re-echo the original cry of Emser. They prohibited, under the most severe penalties, the circulation of the suspected work; they commanded their subjects to deliver it up to the magistrates, and the magistrates to consign it to the flames; and, under the pretence of suppressing the mistakes and falsifications of Luther, they waged a fierce and holy war against the Bible itself. Yet even in this were they inconsistent; for when Emser's version appeared, they gave their patronage to it. And this, as Luther complained, was somewhat vexatious—"that a Duke of Saxony should proscribe my translation and command Emser's to be received, when in reality they were one and the same. And I cannot help regarding with a smile of wonder those very wise heads, who condemn and vilify my Testament, merely because it is published under the name of Luther; but pass no judgment on the deserts of those who steal the writings of others, and affix their own names to them; and thus fraudulently spread their reputation among the people. But there is a judge who

will see to this. Meanwhile, the best revenge that I can desire is this : though Luther's name is suppressed and that of his adversary substituted for it, yet Luther's book is read, and thus the purpose of his labours is promoted by his very enemies.*"

Meanwhile he proceeded in the accomplishment of his mighty task ; and with the learned aid of Melancthon, Amsdorff, Bugenhagen, and other friends, applied his Hebrew acquirements to the version of the Old Testament. This work was not completed till the year 1530, but portions of it were previously published, from time to time, as they were completed.

In a "Treatise on the Secular Power," published in the beginning of 1523, Luther alluded to the persecution of his version ; and at the same time exhorted the people not to resist the execution of such edicts. Not indeed that they were justified in spontaneously resigning the sacred volume—for that was the same as to offer up Jesus Christ to Herod—yet they must abstain from any active resistance to the established authorities.† That treatise, which was written in German, contained some sound

* In April, 1524, Luther writes to Hausman respecting Emser in a somewhat unchristian spirit—"Emsero nihil est respondendum, optime Nicolae, quia is est de quo Paulus dicit—subversus est et suo judicio damnatus et vitandus, peccat enim peccatum ad mortem. Adhuc modicum et orabo contra eum, ut reddat ei Dominus secundum opera sua ; melius est enim ut moriatur, quam ut sic pergat contra conscientiam suam Christum blasphemare ; sine ergo eum ; velociter nimis compescetur miser iste. Sed et tu desine pro eo orare." Apud Seckend. i. sect. 52, § cxxvii. And certainly he did die very soon afterwards.

† Luther's advice was this : "If the prince command you to give up the books, say—'In respect to my person and my goods, I will obey. Command according to the authority which you have on earth, I will submit. But I will not submit if you force my faith or order me to deliver up the books ; for this would be a tyrannical order, beyond the just limits of your authority.' But if, on your making this reply, he shall take away your goods, or inflict any punishment on you for your disobe-

principles, which, through the constant use of three centuries, are now indeed almost worn down into truisms; but which then were new to all, and strange to many, and offensive to the established notions of the great majority of Christians. After tracing, in the first portion of his work, the origin of human power, as a necessary remedy for the vices of mankind, to the authority of Scripture, he proceeded to contend : That, notwithstanding its divine foundation, there were limits to its legitimate operation; that matters of faith were placed above the regulation of princes; that there was no power, save that of God alone, which could prescribe to any man the particulars of his belief; and that any sovereigns, who might make such attempts, were responsible for all the crimes which might proceed from them.

Then, in pursuance of this principle, he argued : That the secular power could not justly take any cognisance of heresies; that it was for the bishops alone to contend against them, and that, not by fire or sword, but only by the word of God; if that weapon should fail, that violence was a vain resource; and that, though you should deluge the world with blood, you would never correct the inward, intellectual defect, whence heresy proceeds—nay, that nothing was so fostering to heresy as violent oppression, without appeal to the word of God. “That is mere injustice and tyranny which operates without reason and conviction. You may tame the tongue; you may force men to falsehood and dissimulation, but the heresy will still remain infixed in the soul, nor can it be expelled by any other power than the word of God alone, throwing illumination into the heart.

“The bishops neglect the word of God. They do not

“dience, happy are you! render thanks unto God, &c. . . .” This was passive resistance—an efficient instrument in peaceful revolutions,

govern souls themselves, but they commit it to the princes to rule them with the sword. The princes allow usuries, rapines, adulteries, homicides, and other crimes to be committed with impunity—nay, they themselves commit them. They let the bishops proceed by their paper decrees of excommunication and censure—so they invert the scandal—they govern souls by the sword, bodies by paper—from secular princes they become ecclesiastics, from ecclesiastics secular. . . .” And afterwards: “Let not the prince think—‘This is my kingdom; these are my people; I will do what I like with my own.’ But rather let him say: ‘I belong to this kingdom and to these people; I am bound to act, not for my own dignity and domination, but for their welfare, that they may live in peace and security.’ You will say: But who would be a prince on these terms? Would you restrict him from all enjoyments? I reply that I am speaking of a prince who is also a Christian. And thus it is certainly very rare that princes are Christians, and almost impossible that they should be so.” And then proceeding with this subject, he suggested some wholesome admonitions and warnings, respecting the choice and use of counsellors and courtiers, the degree of confidence to be placed in them, and other topics connected with the duties of the throne.

In the year 1521 appeared the celebrated book of Henry VIII. of England. It was dedicated, with a complimentary distich, to Leo X., and may have been designed to earn the honourable title by which it was immediately recompensed. Henry was at that time a bigotted enemy to the principles of the Reformation, partly through the prejudices of a scholastic education, partly through the imperious overrulings of his despotic nature. Therefore, whether he actually composed that

work or not, it was with his sincere assent and perfect approbation that it was presented to the world under his name. It was in answer to the "Babylonish Captivity,"—that among Luther's compositions which most excited the indignation of the papists. Accordingly, besides other established opinions and practices, it defended at great length and with much ingenuity the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments. The argument was conducted according to the most approved strategics of the system of Aquinas, and it was enlivened by much severe invective against the Saxon innovator.

Luther was not remarkable for the mercy with which he treated an assailant; nor was it, at least at that moment, any incentive to moderation that that assailant was a king. Before his triumph at Worms, and his lofty meditations at Wartburg, he might have made some compromise in expression, though not in principle, through deference to a royal adversary. But his present mood inclined him to anything rather than humility; and in the contemptuous view which he took, from the height of his evangelical confidence, of all the struggles of his earthly enemies, it was even probable that he would mark out for his fiercest onslaught the most conspicuous among his foes.

His work* was dated on July 15, 1522. In respect to the doctrines in dispute, the only article into which he entered at length was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He ever deemed it of essential importance to overthrow the sacrificial character of the mass. "Let us only once triumph over the mass, and all the papacy is subdued; for on this, as on a rock, the whole system—

* It was originally written in Latin; but Luther himself composed, not long afterwards, a free translation of it in German.

with all its monasteries, bishoprics, colleges, altars, ministers and doctrines, that is with its whole belly—is altogether founded.” And thus, as was his practice, he comparatively neglected the others as subordinate questions, and addressed his arguments to that which seemed to him to involve their fate. At the same time he attacked with great force what he called the Thomistic figment of transubstantiation,* and repeated, with the same illustration, that peculiar opinion on this point which he had propounded in his “*Babylonish Captivity*,” —“that the body is really present in the bread, or along with the bread (*salvo pane*), as fire is present in red-hot iron (*salva ferri substantia*); or as the Godhead was present in the man Jesus, together with the manhood (*salva humanitate*), the substances being in each case so mixed together that each retains its own proper operation and nature, and yet together they constitute a single object.”†

Another very important principle, which involved indeed no theological difference, but was no less an essential element of the Reformation, was repeated with confirmed confidence in this work; and as it was, in the most extreme sense, a popular principle, it was the more

* “*Habemus itaque hunc articulum, quamvis non anxie a me exactum antea, nunc multo confirmatissimum propriis papistarum assertionibus, id est, mendaciis et stultitiis et blasphemis, ut jam tutissimus, merissimum esse impiorum et cæcorum Thomistarum figmentum, quidquid blaterant de transubstantione ista; esseque firmiter fidelibus verbis Dei nitendum, ubi in Paulo simpliciter et pure dicit, panem esse Corpus Christi quem frangimus et manducamus.*” He then proceeds to say that, thanks to the tuition of Henry, he had so far changed his opinion that, having before held the doctrine of transubstantiation to be indifferent, he was now convinced that it was impious and blasphemous. —*Cont. Reg. Angliæ, Luth. Oper., tom. ii. fol. 528.*

† “*Utrobique sic mixtis substantiis, ut sua cuique operatio et natura propria maneat, et tamen unum aliquod constituent.*” —*Ibidem.*

courageous to address it to a king—I mean the universal right of private interpretation of Scripture. And in asserting this right, Luther did not restrict it by any exceptions, nor confine it within any limits, nor express any fear or even thought of any consequences that might proceed from it, but laid it down as an indisputable truth resting on scriptural authority, in the simplest and at the same time the strongest terms. “The right of inquiring and judging, concerning matters of faith, belongs to Christians all and individually, and so entirely belongs to them, that cursed be he who would curtail this right by a single hair’s-breadth. Christ has established it by many irrefragable declarations.* . . . Thus not only is it their right but their duty to form such judgments; and this authority easily overbalances the opinions of all the pontiffs, of all the fathers, the councils, the schools, which confine that right to the bishops and ministers, and impiously and sacrilegiously ravish it from the people, who are in truth the church. . . .”

The bold assertion of this principle, which would not have been so eagerly embraced by the people, had it been asserted less boldly, did more to shake the ecclesiastical structure than the exposure of many abuses, or the loudest declamations against the hierarchy. In fact a reformation recommending so many doctrines, so directly opposed to all established notions, could scarcely have advanced so rapidly, had it not been addressed in some respects to the pride, to the independence, to the peculiar feelings of the mass of the community. Luther’s principal object was the spiritual emancipation of the people, but he would have failed in attaining it, had he not held out to them

* “De doctrina cognoscere et judicare pertinet ad omnes et singulos Christianos, et ita pertinet, ut anathema sit, qui hoc jus uno pilo læserit. Christus enim ipse hoc statuit invictis et variis sententiis.—Matt. xiii. &c. &c.”—Cont. Reg. Angliæ, Luth. Oper., tom. ii. fol. 532.

the strongest temptations, under the name of rights, to rally round him; and among the various incentives which he suggested to that end, not one was more effective than this.

Luther concluded this tract as follows:—"In conclusion, if my asperity towards the king shall give offence to any one, let him take this answer. I have to deal in this book with insensate monsters, who have treated with scorn all my best and moderate writings, and even my very humble submissions, and have only contracted greater callousness through my modesty. Besides, I have refrained from virulence and falsehood, with which the book of the king is crammed quite full. Nor is it a great thing if I should throw censure and sarcasm upon an earthly king, when he has not shuddered to blaspheme the King of Heaven in his discourses, and to profane Him by the most venomous lies. The Lord judges his people in equity. Amen."

I shall not here retail, as some have done, the insulting expressions which Luther heaped, even in unusual profusion, upon his royal aggressor; for the majesty of the purple was not concealed under the cloak of the Thomist, and the twofold character of the polemic presented only a double mark to the arrows of the Reformer.* Doubtless it was from the depths of a religious indignation that these invectives proceeded, as all his holy confidence certainly flowed from the same source. "I am certain," he says in this work, "that I have my doctrine from Heaven, . . . so that theirs is a vain attempt

* A single and by no means the most violent specimen may suffice:—"Confirmo itaque libellum meum de captivitate Babylonica Christianissimum; ut cujus robora non tetigit meticulosus Thomista Rex, et contra meas rupes vagis et aridis stipulis ludens egregium præbuit orbi spectaculum; ut pueri et moriones intelligant ejus insignem inscitiam, hebetudinem, malitiam et nequitiam."

who boast against me their bulls of names and titles, and parade their books of royal authorship. My doctrine will stand, and the Pope will fall, in spite of all the gates of hell, and all the powers of the air, earth, and sea. They have provoked me to war; they shall have war. They scorned the peace which I offered them, and peace they shall no longer have. God shall look to it; which of the two shall first retire from the strife—the Pope or Luther. Thus am I resolved, by Christ's aid, to assume day by day a higher and a higher tone against those silly, senseless, little tyrants, and to keep pace with their madness." And in another passage:—"This is the work and word of God, not mine. Here I stand; here I sit; here I am firm; here I boast and triumph, and insult papists, Thomists, Henricists, sophists, and all the gates of hell. . . ."

Yet those deep convictions of the co-operating and indwelling grace of Christ, that certainty of the truth of his opinions and of heaven's protection upon them, which justified his courage, should have repressed, as many will think, emotions of inflated arrogance, so foreign to the precepts and spirit of the gospel. His enemies perceived this inconsistency, and forthwith turned it against him. Duke George of Saxony was indignant at the contumely cast upon a brother papist and prince, and brought a formal complaint against the libeller before the regency of Nuremberg. Others endeavoured to derive from it proofs of an unchristian and seditious spirit. Some even of the professed adherents to the cause expressed their dissatisfaction, and received a sort of prejudice in favour of the royal composition which it might not otherwise have created.

Yet there were doubtless others, whom the natural tendency to favour the weaker party inclined to sympathise with a monk repelling the aggression of a

king. And in respect to the manner of his defence, Luther acted, if violently, yet not inconsiderately, nor without a clear foresight of the scandal which he should occasion: neither did he testify, even in reply to the chidings of his friends, any sort of repentance or misgiving:—"I knew very well that what I was writing against the king of England, that silly and virulent Thomist, would give offence to many; but I chose to do so—*ita placuit mihi*. Besides, there were many reasons which made it necessary. What I am now doing is not yet known, but it will be manifested hereafter." This was addressed to Spalatin in the September following. Somewhat earlier, in a letter to another friend, he ventured to excuse his expressions by the example of those which were addressed to the Jews by Peter, Paul, and even by Christ himself.

"But I have already written," he continued, "as every one knows, abundance of smooth books without any severity, in the most friendly and even humble tone, and treated all their lies and wickedness in the most even and regulated manner. But the more humble I become, the more they rage and storm, and cry out against me and my doctrine, till they become hardened to all impressions, and have neither ears to hear nor eyes to see. He then who is so constituted as to despise all my patience and persuasion, why should it move me if he is offended at my reproaches? for it is clear enough that such a one sees no good in me, and only seeks a pretext to despise me. He who embraces my doctrine with a right heart will never take offence at my reproaches. Besides, what injustice it is, while my enemies are heaping all sorts of slanders upon me, to cry up them as the best of Christians, and to denounce me heretic!

"In a word, the reason of my severity will be made

manifest in its proper season. Whosoever will not believe that it comes from a good intention, and will serve a good end, let him wait; he will acknowledge it hereafter. My gracious sovereign and many of my other friends have often admonished me to write more softly; but I have always replied, as I now reply, that I will not do so. My cause is not a cause of middle measures, wherein one may concede and dissemble, even as I to this very moment have unwisely done."

In his reply to the preface of *Latomus** there is another remarkable passage on this same subject, which, as it has given more ground than any other for reflections on his reputation, requires especially and in common justice to be explained in his own words:—

"I have never required of any one to think me modest or sanctified; I only want men to recognise the gospel, and I give them full licence of assailing to the utmost of their lust my personal character. Yet does my conscience suggest to me this boast—that no man's private life† or character has ever been attacked by me; only I have assailed with considerable bitterness doctrines, studies, impious and sacrilegious devices for the corruption of the word of God; in which matter, though I may have some blame, yet am I not without the example of John the Baptist, and after him of Christ, in their denunciations of the Pharisees. . . . My shell may be a little too hard, but my kernel is soft and sweet. For I wish no harm to any one; I only wish that all would take good counsel and agree with me.‡ Besides, this harshness of mine, as it hurts no one, so does it deceive

* *Luther, Op. tom. ii. fol. 380.*

† Not Aleander's?

‡ "Nemini enim male volo, sed omnibus opto mecum quam optime consultum. Porro duritia mea, ut nemini nocet, ita neminem fallit. Qui me vitat nihil a me patietur. Qui me fert lucro augetur."—*Ibid.*

no one. He that keeps out of my way will suffer nothing from me. He that bears with me finds me profitable. He that rebuketh a man shall afterwards find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue. (Prov. xxviii. 23.)

I shall leave this subject where Luther has placed it—only observing that, however plausibly he might plead in his defence a few occasional scriptural expressions very rarely scattered through the volume of the New Testament, the spirit of that book and of the religion taught by it is extremely different from that, which presides over most of the controversial works of Luther; and which gives them a tone of insolent indignation, more like the clamour of the Apostles calling down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan sectarians, than the calm and holy voice of Christ rebuking their fury.

But in respect to the other and more plausible plea, that it was good policy to give loose to this violence; that mighty objects were not to be attained by middle measures; that in dealing with a bigotted and implacable foe, every compromise was dangerous, even to the show of compromise; that mildness would have been mistaken for timidity, moderation for weakness, while every approach to concession would only have redoubled the rage of the persecutor—all this was unquestionably founded in truth, if not altogether true. Luther's opponents were men attached to the established abuses inseparably and incorrigibly, because they were attached by the tie of personal interest. Besides, all their hereditary prejudices, things which are very slowly melted by the influence of reason, cemented their adherence to the same cause. And to this was superadded, among the most numerous and virulent portion of them, the keen, exciting motive of professional zeal. The blinder the understanding of this faction the fiercer were their hearts. The hatred

which they bore to the Reformer could be extinguished by nothing but his blood ; it was impossible to soften them, it became necessary to overthrow them ; and there was no consideration which could possibly check their fury, except fear.

Again, it was to the mass of the community that the writings of Luther were in fact addressed. It was there alone that he could hope to make any deep impression—there alone was his prospect of any lasting success. Now the multitude (in which I do not intend to include the very lowest classes) were of course unable to do perfect justice to his arguments, or to calculate his means of success. They were obliged to judge from appearances ; they took their tone from his ; they caught their courage from his confidence, for from his confidence they inferred his strength ; and the higher he rose in audacity the better expectations they formed of the triumph of their common enterprise. From the same appearances they likewise inferred his earnestness, and this with them was scarcely a less important assurance than the other ; had he been more temperate, they would probably have suspected his honesty as well as his resolution. For these and similar reasons I have no question, that the cause of Luther was *upon the whole* advanced and recommended even by the temerity of his unsparing invectives ; and that, had he given less offence to his enemies, he would have found less zeal, less courage, and far less devotion in his friends. Moreover, we should not forget that the comparative rudeness of that age permitted much that now seems barbarous ; and also that in the strife which was then raging his opponents were at least equally coarse and abusive, while the example of scurrility and slander was certainly set by them.

NOTE.

John Bugenhagen or Bugenhagen, who has been mentioned in this chapter, was a native of Pomerania, born in 1485. His literary distinction recommended him when young to the notice of his sovereign, Bogislaus, under whose authority he devoted two years to composing the history of his country. He, like Myconius, caught the first sparks of intellectual independence from the writings of Erasmus; but when he received, in 1520, a copy of the Babylonish Captivity, he was so astounded, on the first hasty glance which he threw over it, as to declare that in the whole history of the church there had never existed so pestilential a heretic as the author. But he too examined and reflected, and by these means he presently arrived at the opposite conclusion—"all the rest of the world is blind and this man only sees the light." Thenceforward he became a zealous disciple and apostle of the Reformation, and removing to Wittemberg on the following year undertook the ministry of one of the churches there. Yet he made occasional journeys for evangelical purposes to his native land, to Hamburg in 1522, to Lubeck in 1530, till he was appointed in 1537 by Christiern to the episcopal superintendence over the Danish churches.

CHAPTER XVIII.

POPE ADRIAN VI. AND THE DIET OF NUREMBERG.—
PRACTICAL INNOVATIONS OF LUTHER.

Assembly of the Diet of Nuremberg—death of Leo X.—accession of Adrian VI.—his history and character—a thorough scholastic—his Brief to the Diet in abuse of Luther—his Instruction in confession of the corruptions of the church and in promise of reformation—astonishment and disgust of the ecclesiastics—the secular members draw up the famous Hundred Grievances of Nuremberg—recess of the Diet—substance of the grievances—all this favourable to the cause of Luther—insulting Brief from Adrian to Frederick—substance and quotations—resented by the latter—the Lutherans begin to establish their own churches—Luther undertakes the office of reconstruction—with great moderation—respecting baptism—the Eucharist—extent of his changes—private confession—his measures for the spiritual instruction and edification of the faithful—effects a version of the Psalms into German verse—his principles entirely opposite to those of the papists—his to enlighten, theirs to encourage spiritual ignorance—evils occasioned by the eruption of carnal monks—the revenues of the church—convention of Leisnitz—approved by Luther—his object and certain proposals by him on that subject—various acts of persecution—by George of Saxony—exertions of Alexander—execution of the martyrs of Brussels—Luther's hymn on the subject.

ON the 17th of March, a few days after Luther's return to Wittemberg, the States of the empire assembled in Diet at Nuremberg. It is probable that the affairs of religion would have occupied little of their attention but for the recent reappearance of the Reformer. He was again in public, in action, in the very front of battle, preaching and writing with more than his wonted audacity, in avowed and proclaimed defiance both of the papal excommunication and the imperial edict. The

bishops, who formed a numerous portion of the assembly, loudly called for the execution of that sentence; they inveighed against Frederick, as now no longer conniving at the treason of his subject, and throwing a decent veil of dissimulation over his ambiguous policy, but openly protecting the enemy of the church and the empire; they derided the poor justification which was attempted by the (above-mentioned) letter of Luther, and insisted on immediate proceedings against him and his adherents. But the explosion of this storm was deferred by the departure of some of the leading members and the consequent adjournment of the Diet till the autumn following.

Meanwhile a very important change had taken place in the policy of the Vatican. In the December of 1521 Leo X., yet in the flower of life, died; and without entering more deeply than I have already done into the particulars of his character, I may observe that he left behind him a reputation much surpassing his merits. He had some brilliancy of talents, some show of classical erudition, and some passion for polite literature and the liberal arts; and he maintained, if that be any praise in a Christian prelate, a magnificent and festive court, frequented by the votaries of profane learning and enlivened by various exhibitions of secular taste and genius. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he was wise because he was literary, or humane because he was polished, or liberal or charitable in principle because he was prodigal of the revenues of the church. He was notoriously, almost proverbially, immoral: to any theological acquirements, or any religious sentiment, he did never so much as pretend;* and if he was personally

* Fra Paolo expresses the same with more delicacy: "E sarebbe stato un perfetto pontefice, se con queste" (i. e. his liberality, taste for literature, polite manner, &c.) "avesse congiunto qualche cognizione delle cose della religione e aliquanto più d' inclinazione alla pietà; dell' una e dell' altra

free from the rancour of ecclesiastical bigotry, he was not very careful to restrain that vice in others: nor is there any reason to believe that Luther, had he fallen into the power of Rome, would have experienced more mercy under the sceptre of Leo than under that of any other pontiff.

He was succeeded, through a strange intrigue, by that member of the sacred college who bore the least resemblance to himself. Adrian VI. was a foreigner, a native of Utrecht, educated at Louvain: he was of an obscure and indigent family; his morals were without stain; his manners were grave and severe; he was little conversant with the elegances of social life, or secular literature, but he was deeply versed in the writings of Aquinas and his followers, and enjoyed the reputation of an accomplished scholastic; and, to crown the contrast, he was a rigid observer of ecclesiastical discipline, and had always endeavoured, as far as his authority extended, to enforce it.

He had been the tutor to Charles V.,* and his ambassador in Spain. He then became bishop of Tortosa. He was promoted to the rank of cardinal in 1517, and when his master succeeded to the monarchy of Spain the regency was conferred upon Adrian. Thus it happened that though he was elected to the See on the 9th of January, 1522, he did not make his formal entry into Rome till the 24th of the September following.

delle quali non mostrava aver gran cura.” (Lib. i. cap. iv.) “Nel che” (says Pallavicino still more delicately) “io non gli contraddico. Non voglio già io affermare, che fosse in lui tanta cura della pietà, quanta si richiedeva dello stato quasi divino, &c. . . .” Guiccardini, a layman (lib. xiv.), speaks with less caution: “Egli per natura dedito all’ ozio ed ai piaceri, ed ora per la troppo licenza e grandezza alieno sopra modo dalle faccende, immerso tutto il giorno ad udire musiche, facezie, e buffoni, inchinato ancora troppo più che l’ onesto ai piaceri. . . .”

* Hence a saying became current on his elevation to the pontificate: “Utrecht planted, Louvain watered, and Charles gave the increase.”

His attention was immediately turned to the affair of Luther, and the restoration of the concord of the church. He perceived no doubt that some errors had been committed by his predecessor, and he instantly decided on adopting a very different line of policy. This was such as sprang very naturally from the rectitude of his principles and the narrowness of his understanding. He was thoroughly sensible of the manifold scandals which disgraced the externals of the church, and he was seriously bent on their removal; but this was the extent of his view. His mind, which had ever paced in the scholastic trammels, which acknowledged no truth beyond the schools of the Thomists, and was incapable of comprehending any argument except such as were in use there, rejected with sincere contempt the clearest conclusions of Luther. Indeed his simple method of reasoning and naked appeals to common sense appeared to the distorted eye of Adrian so palpably puerile, so manifestly at variance with the first principles of ratiocination, as to make him even incredulous as to the great effects ascribed to them. If a powerful party had adopted his name and professed his opinions, it was not, according to this honest scholastic, that they really held those opinions, or could possibly have fallen into errors so extravagant, but that they were disgusted with the visible and notorious abuses of the ecclesiastical system—the violation of the canons, the rapacity of the secular clergy, the ignorant indolence of the monks, the profligacy of all—and that, if these could be amended, they would return from their present truancy self-convicted, and rush back with penitent affection to the bosom of their holy mother.

Acting under these ideas he addressed, on the 25th of November, a “Brief,” to the following effect, to the Diet then re-assembled at Nuremberg:—He deplored the ravages of the church through the perversity of a here-

tic, whom neither the paternal admonitions of Leo, nor his condemnation, confirmed by the edict of Worms, had been able to silence; he lamented the prevalence of the heresy, and, placing it by the side of the Turkish* invasions, described it as the intestine infliction of Germany; he deplored it the more, as it had extended even to the great and noble; he expressed his amazement that a brave and sensible nation should allow itself to be thus seduced away from godliness by a miserable apostate monk, who pretended alone to possess lights which were refused to the universal church; he recommended the princes, if they regarded their religion with little zeal, at least to be watchful over their interests, since it was the obvious purpose of those sectarians, under the cloak of the gospel and Christian liberty, to overthrow all civil institutions, and to spare neither the property nor the persons of those in power. He concluded with a savage and sanguinary peroration: he entreated the sovereigns to have recourse to the sword; † he reminded them how God had punished Dathan and Abiram for their resistance to the high priest; how the most religious emperors had employed the secular arm against Jovinian and Priscillian; and lastly how the pious ancestors of those, whom he was then addressing, had by an act of perfect justice delivered the world from the heretics Huss and Jerome, who were even at this moment revived in Luther.

Pope Adrian was living by the light of the preceding

* In the early part of his "Instruction" Adrian compares Luther to Mahomet, "because he allows a plurality of wives, and gives every facility of divorce."—Sleidan, lib. iv. A calumny of course.

† "Ubi cancer ita ulcerosum est, ut blandis lenibusque medicamentis curari non possit, aspera erunt et ignita cauteria adhibenda et abalienata membra ab integro corpore penitus resecanda, &c."

century. As far as his books had carried him he was right. The two heresies which he compared were in the most essential points the same; the same in some particular tenets and principles, the same in their general appeal to the Word of God—only the age was different. That which had been blasphemy at Constance was held to be very sound sense and very pure Christianity at Nuremberg. In this numerous assembly there were few or none, except the spiritual members, who responded to the pontifical cry for blood. The secular princes universally closed their hearts against it; and whether it was through the improved humanity of that age, or through an augmented distrust and detestation of the policy of Rome, they rejected with a single voice the appeal of the Pontiff.

His nuncio, Cheregati, then proceeded to unfold the second commission of his master. It was his honest wish, however thwarted by his domestic councillors,*

* Francesco Soderino, cardinal of Preneste, had held important offices under the three preceding Popes, and was accounted among the wisest and most sagacious of the members of the Consistory. The counsels which he offered to Adrian were to the following effect:—"That any reformation of the court of Rome would only advance the credit of Luther; since the multitude, who only judge things by the event, would receive it as an admission of the general corruption, and found on one concession their strongest argument for demanding more; that if such was the nature of man, such was also the lesson taught by the history of the church; that all the heresies which had ever risen had always found their pretence in the abuses of the court, yet that no Pope had ever reformed the court, but only admonished the princes to protect the church; that the policy which had succeeded in times past should be persisted in for ever; that nothing was more destructive to governments than changes of policy; that dangers always arose from opening new paths; that it was the safest plan for the Pope to tread in the footsteps of his predecessors, which had led to such happy results; that no heresy had ever yet been extinguished by reformation, but by crusades and the rousing of princes and their subjects to the use of salutary violence, &c." —*Fra Paolo, Istor. Concil. Trident., lib. i. sect. xxiv.*

not only to destroy the offender, but also to remove what were, in his mind, the real causes of the offence. He delivered an "Instruction" to his ambassador conceived in this spirit; and the latter, to the perfect amazement and dismay of the ecclesiastical portion of the assembly, denounced, almost in the language of Luther, the vices and degradation of the hierarchy. "It cannot be dissembled that God afflicts his church for the sins of the people, and especially of the prelates, since it is from the priests, as Holy Writ assures us, that the sins of the people derive their origin; for no one is ignorant that for some years the Holy See has committed many abominations. There have been abuses in spiritual things, excesses in ordinances—in short, everything has been changed and perverted. Nor is it strange that the disease should have descended from the head to the members, from the highest pontiffs to the inferior prelates. We have all declined, every one of us, from his ways, nor has there for a long time been one who has done good—no not one. Let us then give glory to God, and humble ourselves before him, and rather judge ourselves, than wait to be judged of him with the scourge of his wrath. Wherefore, so far as we are concerned, we will use all our exertions, that first of all this court of Rome, whence all the evil may have originated, be reformed, to the end that the other parts of the ecclesiastical body may derive their health and purification from the same source whence they have contracted their corruption; and we feel the more closely bound to effect this reformation as we see the people most earnestly bent upon it. . . ." At the same time he directed the nuncio to make the most satisfactory promises to the Diet, that grievances should be redressed, abuses corrected, and the concordats which had been made with his predecessors faithfully observed.

The propositions of Adrian shared the fate which

usually attends well-intentioned middle measures when they come too late. They gave satisfaction to neither party. The affairs had advanced too far. The opposite factions were too decidedly compromised. They saw their respective interests much too clearly; and above all they understood that, to which the Pope was totally blind, the real state of the quarrel. Thus the papal adherents, who were for the most part ecclesiastics, while they applauded the "Brief," and rose up in a body and shouted for vengeance upon Luther,* were no less deeply offended by the "Instruction;" for it revealed those unpleasant truths of which the utterance had hitherto been called heresy, which they may indeed sometimes have whispered amongst themselves, but which they had certainly never expected to hear from the lips of a Pope.

To the great body of the temporal princes this bold declaration furnished matter for triumph and exultation, since it contained an unqualified admission of the justice of their manifold and oft-repeated and oft-eluded complaints against the court of Rome. It placed them on higher and stronger ground; it united them more closely in the determination to shake off the burden and the wrong. But it inspired them with no confidence in the assurances which attended it; it removed not the well-grounded suspicion with which long experience of her duplicity had taught them to regard all the acts and all the promises of Rome.† They perceived that it still

* "Tollendum esse Lutherum."

† Sleidan (lib. iv.) expresses a suspicion that even Adrian may have been at heart insincere. But he is probably wrong. Had the Pope been a hypocrite he would scarcely have been so ardently hated at Rome—this is the best pledge of his honesty. The great fault that even Pallavicino finds with him is—That he was too vehement, too open, and too sincere; and most exceedingly imprudent in making a public acknowledgment of the corruptions of Rome; that, since he had "these conceits," he did wrong to propound them to the Diet, and most so, to propound them in writing; that his wiser plan would have been to reform in fact, while he palliated the causes of the abuses.

remained for them to enforce the accomplishment of her assurances, and they knew what Maximilian had so early foreseen, that their most powerful instrument for that purpose was Luther. And thus, while they prepared to turn to their own account all the advantage that was given them by the Instruction, they altogether declined to comply with the requisition of the Brief.

In their official reply to the nuncio, the most important article was a demand for a free council, to be assembled within a year's time in some city of Germany, for the final settlement of the various subjects in dispute. It was declared in the same document: That just reasons for the non-execution of the Edict of Worms were to be found in the avowed abuses of the Court of Rome; that a schism and perhaps a fatal revolution were to be apprehended from the discontent of the people; that the Pope deserved great credit for his confession of those abuses; that the Lutherans should publish no new works before the meeting of the above-mentioned council; that the preachers should preach the word of God pure, and according to the approved interpretations of the church of Christ, and abstain from seditious and controversial harangues; that the bishops should see this enforced and appoint proper preachers and do their utmost to advance the course of the gospel; that there should be appointed censors of the press; that married priests and monks might be punished by canonical inflictions, but not by civil—seeing that the civil law took no cognisance of that offence; that the Annates, collected on the plea of a Turkish invasion, ought to pass for the future into the public treasury.

It is needless to say that this reply was entirely unsatisfactory to the legate. It even betrayed him into some unguarded expressions, almost unknown to the cold dissimulation of Italian diplomacy. But the princes, disregarding this, proceeded eagerly to pursue the shadow

of the Reformation once more raised up before them, and prepared the Memorial of "The Hundred Grievances," so celebrated in the annals of Germany.

It is unnecessary to remind the reader of the earlier efforts of the German princes to moderate the bondage of Rome, and of the ineffectual concordats to which they had led. Twice, even since the appearance of Luther, had this same vain attempt been repeated—at Augsburg in 1518, and more recently at Worms.* But I shall here record rather more at length some of the leading articles on which these remonstrances chiefly turned, that it may be easier to contrast the sort of reformation desired by the potentates with that which the people demanded by the voice of Luther. The grievances reiterated by the former were of this description: legal processes carried to Rome which ought to be conducted on the spot; dispensations prejudicial to the rights of the churches; uncanonical interference with elections; the profusion of absolutions and indulgences, and the general demoralization thus occasioned; the intrusion of cardinals or protonotaries into the best benefices; the ignorance and entire incapacity of the resident pastors; perpetual levies of tenths under false pretences; and above all, the oppressive impost of Annates,† and the rigour with which it was levied. Many others swelled the present list: the superstitious and puerile absurdities delivered by ignorant and hireling preachers, in the place of the pure word of God; the pernicious superabundance of festivals; reservations of benefices, com-

* See above. Conclusion of chap. xiv.

† The original pretext for the imposition of Annates was, that the Pope might have a perpetual fund to repel the invasions of the infidel. Campeggio, in his first letter to Frederick, admits that the monies collected and carried to Rome for this purpose were not altogether applied to it—"non esse totam huc impensam!"

mendams, expectative graces, &c.; the abuse of excommunication, by introducing it into temporal concerns; the exactions of the clergy for the administration of the sacraments; indeed the universal venality of things sacred; the licenses to keep concubines, and the general immorality of the spiritual order. To these were added the exemption of ecclesiastics in criminal causes, and the great encroachments of the spiritual on the secular jurisdiction.

The grievances were divided under three heads: Those which enslaved the people; those which plundered them; those which deprived them of legitimate access to justice. They touched no doctrine; they disturbed no ceremony or practice; all that department of the church might have continued to flourish with the perfect consent of the rulers of the people, if Rome would have made some concession in rapacity and ambition. Yet must it be mentioned that, even in these moderate representations, made within the pale of the strictest orthodoxy—even after the avowal of the Pope himself—the ecclesiastics would take no part; and that the Hundred Grievances of Nuremberg were drawn up entirely by the hands of laymen. This paper concluded with a remonstrance, or protest, that, if the abuses designated were not removed, the German people neither could nor would endure them longer, but would take immediate means to recover its independence and vindicate its ancient freedom.

Yet imperfect as was this statement of the vices of the Vatican, and worldly as were the motives whence it proceeded, it was highly favourable to the cause of Luther. His person and principles were alike protected by the resolutions of this assembly, though it had, perhaps, no great affection either for the one or the other. The enemies of Rome, whatever might be the particular grounds of their enmity, were for the moment drawn to-

gether by one purpose ; and, though on many points they felt and reasoned differently, they resolved on this occasion to act in unison. The deep absorbing faith of Luther, and the financial calculations of the ignorant and perhaps selfish princes of the empire, co-operated for the humiliation of the universal oppressor. And though the object of the latter was no more than to reform the externals of the church, while that of the other was to regenerate the religion at any peril to the church, yet the diversity of their views might not at the moment be perceptible to either, through the ardour of a common hatred and, to a certain extent, a common cause. The hopes of Luther had never yet been so well founded as at the close of the Diet of Nuremberg.

This took place on the 6th of March, 1523. Somewhat earlier Frederick received a brief from Adrian, which possesses some historical value, as a monument of the honest bigotry, the bad taste, and the extreme imprudence of its author. Prolix, violent, declamatory and dull, it might have taken its place among the other long-forgotten invectives against Luther, had it not concluded with a very insulting menace to the Elector. The argument on which the Pope chiefly rested his cause, was the oft-repeated improbability, that one man, an apostate, sacrilegious, carnal, "crapulous," should alone have discovered the truth, while the whole universe, with all the holy fathers and sainted luminaries to guide it, was wrapped in darkness and delusion. Likewise he censured the violent language of that blasphemer, and inferred from it what the spirit was by which he was animated. Yet in the same breath he gave the same evidence of his own spirit, by pouring out from his apostolical bosom a flood of abuse and slander, in no respect less virulent than that which he reproved ! He professed too his regard for the souls of the faithful ! "You nourish in your bosom and cherish a serpent, who

infests heaven and earth with the poison of his tongue. And as the soul is more valuable than the body, so much more horrible, even than the Turkish invasion, is that more than hellish poison which, by the contagion of heresies and schisms, destroys so many myriads of souls. We owe it to you that numbers are now receding from the unity of the church ; that the temples are without congregations, the congregations without priests, the priests without the reverence due to them, Christians in short without Christ : that the beautiful order of the Tabernacle is confounded, and men, roused as by a trumpet from their Christian tranquillity to rebellion, rapine, carnage, conflagration, to the great and manifest risk of the Christian republic—for which egregious deserts of yours towards the church of Christ of what reward shall I deem you deserving ?—of what chastisement undeserving ? You will say perhaps, the serpent has deceived me ! You have merited this for having nourished him. . . . But what diabolical blindness is this, that you should rather trust for scriptural interpretation to one carnal wretch, who is for ever belching forth wine and crapula,* than to the rest of the world, to so many spiritual fathers, who have approved the truth of their doctrine by the sanctity of their lives, by the manifestation of the Spirit, by their glorious virtue, and most of all by their martyrdom ! . . . This sacrilegious enemy of God shudders not to break with impious hand

* “Uni carnali homuncioni, semper eructanti vinum et crapulam, quam reliquo orbi universo,” &c. ; and the conclusion : “Non commitemus, ut quos olim cum Magno Carolo Adrianus Pontifex in Christo genuerunt, nunc Adrianus Pontifex et Imperator Carolus sub schismatico et heretico tyranno hæresum et schismatum sinamus interire contagione. Quare revertamini ad cor, respiscite, tu tuique misere seducti Saxones, nisi utrumque gladium Apostolicum simul et Cæsareum olim velitis experiri.” This last clause will admit a slightly different interpretation from that which I have given it.

the sacred images—nay, the very cross of Christ, and to trample them under his polluted feet; he never ceases to rouse the laity to wash their hands in the blood of the clergy; it is his object that men may be suffocated in their sins, that the wounded souls may not be healed by the divine mercy, through the operation of the sacraments. And thus he has either destroyed them all, or so infected them, as to leave them poisons rather than medicines.

“Wherefore if you shall not listen to my warnings, nor walk in my admonitions, I denounce this to you, in the name of Almighty God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose vicar on earth I am, that in this present world you shall not escape with impunity, and in the future you shall be burnt with eternal fire. Pope Adrian and the Emperor Charles, whose worthy and Christian edict against the Lutheran perfidy you have not feared offensively to violate, live and are in concord. And we will take care that those Saxons whom Pope Adrian and Charlemagne originally brought to Christ—we Adrian and Charles will take good care that they perish not by the contagion of heresies and schisms under a schismatical and heretical tyrant. Wherefore return to your senses—return to reason—you and your miserably deluded Saxons, unless you desire to feel the double edge of the apostolical and imperial swords.”

Frederick was extremely offended by this production. He refused to accept it as the composition of a Pope—he deemed it beneath the dignity and character even of the church of that age. But in defiance of its insolent menaces, or in consequence of them, he instructed his minister at the Diet, Feilitsch, to publish a protest in his name—that he would never consent to any regulation in opposition to the progress of the gospel; and that his conduct should ever be guided, so long as he lived and reigned, by the principles of uprightness and piety. Such was

the wholesome effect of Adrian's fury ; respecting which we may just observe, as a curious and at first sight a singular circumstance, that, as one of the most barbarous acts of authorised persecution had been perpetrated by the popular and self-reforming Council of Constance, so among all the Popes, with whom Luther had to deal, the fiercest and most unmeasured in his hatred was the self-reforming Adrian. To have some principles in common adds a sting to religious difference. The papists generally detested Luther more than they detested the Turk ; but the man among them who abhorred him most was he who had proclaimed that there was some justice on his side. And that impolitic avowal of Adrian—impolitic because it was unseasonable and led to no results—became an useful instrument in the hands of Luther and his friends in their subsequent struggles with the papacy.

Meanwhile as the Diet of Nuremberg had not confirmed the Edict of Worms or commanded its execution, a general impression was created, that it was officially suspended, as indeed, through the impossibility of enforcing it, it was virtually null.

The towns and congregations, which were in open revolt against Rome and had partially shaken off the yoke of her doctrines and ceremonies, began presently to discover the necessity of substituting something definite in their places. They began to learn that in the work of reformation the least and easiest task is to destroy ; that, while mere courage and declamation will sometimes suffice for the overthrow of a vicious system, the much rarer qualities of discretion and tact and foresight and inventive genius are required for the office of reconstruction. And thus, as they now turned their thoughts in that direction, they immediately saw the difficulties and dangers which beset them ; they felt the want of some strong hand to guide and rule them,

and again appealed, as to their sole resource, to the authority of Luther.

He perceived that the season was arrived for this renovation, and he consented. "Thus far," he wrote, "have I treated with the people by books and sermons, that I might win their hearts away from their attachment to impious ceremonies, and break in pieces without violence those abominations of Satan. Therefore I have commanded nothing and innovated nothing, but have kept delaying with fear and anxiety, not only through deference to the infirm in faith, to whom no sudden change would have been acceptable, but still more through the necessity of making a reluctant compromise with those light and fastidious spirits, who rush forward without faith or reason, and delight in nothing but novelty, and, as soon as that is over, become sick and disgusted. But as I have now good hope that the hearts of many are, by the grace of God, enlightened and confirmed, and as it is now high time to remove those scandals from the church of Christ, we must venture on some attempt; lest, through an undue apprehension of their levity and the scandals that may arise from it, we should perpetuate the universally existing iniquities."*

The regulations propounded by Luther† were in conformity with the caution he expressed. In the first place, he suggested them in the form of counsels rather than of rules; in the next, he restricted them to points which seemed essential, and professed his wish to preserve all that could be safely preserved of the established

* "Formula Missæ et Communionis pro Ecclesia Wittembergensi, Venerabili in Christo, D. Nicolao Hausmanno Episcopo Cygnæ Ecclesiæ." Luth. Oper. tom. ii. fol. 586.

† "Von Ordnung Gottes dienst in Germania, 1523. Das gesange in der sonntags messen und vesper lass man bleiben, denn sie sind fast gut, &c. . ."

practices. In respect to the service of baptism, he made no other change, than that it should be performed in German instead of Latin; and that the people should be instructed to attach no serious importance to the mere human ceremonies* which formed a part of it. But regarding the administration of the other sacrament, he went much farther into particulars, and suggested many alterations; because the attention of the people had been much more strongly called to its abuses; and because these involved, as he had taught them, two very important doctrinal errors.

Yet even here he was very careful not to recommend any unnecessary alteration. On the assumption, that the sacrifice and the change of substance were false opinions, he abolished all the expressions or ceremonies which gave countenance to either; yet, while he prohibited the adoration of the host he permitted its elevation, through the fear of offending the feebler brethren, or those not yet sufficiently instructed. He likewise retained the use of candles and sacerdotal habits and incense, as matters of indifference. For the same reason he did not press the immediate abolition even of private masses, however strongly, by his writing and preaching, he had denounced their blasphemous impiety. And even these very moderate innovations, thus cautiously proposed, he did not venture to prescribe for universal reception, or as a perpetual law; but, while he left much to the discretion of individual pastors, under particular

* On this occasion he retained not only the exorcism, with the three blowings upon the infant, but the putting of salt into its mouth, touching its ears and nose with spittle, anointing its breast, and shoulders, imprinting the cross upon its breast, and placing the cap on its head and the taper in its hand. But in the second edition of his service of baptism, two years later, the sufflation, salt, spittle and chrism were omitted, but the exorcism, the sign of the cross and the induvium, or clothing, retained.

circumstances of time or place, he was desirous that the forms of worship should be held comparatively insignificant. In his mind, the essential duty of the ministry was to purify the heart, to enforce the everlasting doctrines of faith and charity, and inculcate the unbounded practice of mutual toleration and forbearance.

In the same spirit he recommended private confession* as useful, but did not impose it as necessary. He even retained provisionally the Latin service in the Eucharist, interspersed with hymns in German, until the communicants should be gradually brought to endure the entire change. But he insisted in very plain terms on the administration in both kinds, and refused the communion to any who still indulged scruples on this more important point. At the same time he took measures for the better instruction of the faithful. He directed a previous examination of those intending to communicate, with rational and scriptural explanation; and above all things he inculcated the diligent exposition of the holy writings, the delivering of sermons and homilies, in short a perpetual and zealous appeal to the feelings and understanding of the people. And here in fact was the key to the most essential distinctions between the church of Luther and that which it superseded. The latter was founded upon the ignorance of mankind, and addressed itself to the vices and infirmities which proceed from ignorance. Therefore it was a church, externally, of pomp and ceremonies; internally, of imposture and superstition—appealing, on the one side, to the mere senses, on the other, to the credulity, that incurable and most astonishing frailty, of uncultivated man.

Luther, with the opposite view, at once abolished many of the festivals which overloaded and sensualised

* “*Revocata est in usum confessio auricularis et privata absolutio, quam Carolostadius aboleverat.*” Scultet. ann. 1523. p. 164.

the church. In turning to the public services, he censured the selections from the Epistles, read after the Collects, as of too carnal a tendency: "The man who placed them in the Liturgy seems to me to have been a singularly ill-instructed and superstitious estimator of works:" and he directed that for many of them should be substituted those passages of St. Paul, which especially inculcate faith. He was likewise desirous to introduce among the people the practice of singing hymns and psalms, as means of exciting their devotion. And to this end, he prevailed upon Spalatin and John of Döltz to assist him in turning the Psalms into German verse. In 1524 the first Psalm-book appeared at Wittenberg. It was the joint composition of several learned men; but the spirit which it breathed was one and the same. And it is observed by a German writer,* that the sacred songs of those days possessed a depth of power, which penetrated and warmed the very recesses of the heart; a simplicity and freshness of life, which was never attained by the productions of any later age. Thus were they especially suited to Luther's purpose of substituting inward piety for the show of external observances.

He made his appeal to the common understanding and to the better principles of mankind. He assumed that they were sentient and rational beings; that they possessed minds susceptible of improvement; souls which might be purified and exalted; and therefore that their religion should be placed, not in their ceremonies, but in their bosoms. He believed, moreover, that it was a good and true religion, and that it would endure any scrutiny; and thus that it was the duty of a church to instruct its adherents, not to dazzle and delude them. He took a higher view not only of the moral capacities of the multitude, but also of the merits of the religion;

* Marheinecke, tom. ii. kap. ii.

and while the sceptical papist, pretending to be a bigot, closed the Bible against the people, through a conscious fear lest a knowledge of its contents should lead them to suspect its inspiration, Luther, having no such suspicion, boldly threw open the Book of Life to universal examination, confident that deeper inquiry would only create a firmer conviction of its truth. No doubt the hierarchy deemed this a fearful experiment. Yet, after three centuries of trial, may we not pronounce it successful?

If it was an office of great delicacy to legislate for the spiritual government of his infant community, to mediate, on the most tender of all subjects, between rashness and timidity, and so to prescribe the forms of worship as to satisfy one party without offending the other, another matter of no less difficulty now engaged the attention of Luther. As several monasteries were in part or wholly deserted, it became necessary to provide a new object for their revenues. A fresh element of discord and danger was thus thrown into the cauldron of the Reformation; and precaution was to be taken, not only against the violence or the infirmity of religious minds, but against the rapacity of the selfish and worldly. In the former case, the perplexity lay for the most part with the lower classes; in the latter, the peril was to be apprehended chiefly from the great.

A circumstance arose at this time which, though in itself trifling, served to bring forward the views of Luther on that question. The magistrates and principal inhabitants of the town of Leisnitz, in Misnia, concluded, in 1522, a sort of convention with the Abbot of the monastery of Bouch, in the immediate neighbourhood, to the following effect: That a committee should be appointed annually for the administration of the revenues of this church; that it should consist of ten

persons, namely, two nobles, two magistrates, three citizens of Leisnitz, and three of the principal inhabitants of the adjacent country; that it should receive all the rents and alms of the church, and employ them for the maintenance of pastors, deacons and school-masters, of the poor, of orphans and widows, and for the repairs of the sacred edifices. Some other prudent and humane regulations were added, for the repression of monastic mendicity, the better provision for the poor in years of famine, and such matters.

Now this arrangement entrusted the management of ecclesiastical property to a body of laymen; it likewise recognised three objects, besides the maintenance of the clergy, for its application, namely, education, charity, and the support of the fabric of the churches. Yet Luther entirely approved, if indeed he did not secretly dictate, the convention containing these principles; he prevailed upon the Elector, by two bold letters, to sanction and confirm it; and he published it in the following year, and prefaced it with some general observations, in German, respecting the ecclesiastical revenues. It was his object to save them from the promiscuous rapine with which they were threatened. He was as much opposed to the spoliation of individuals, actually in enjoyment of any portion of them, as to their forcible ejection; and he recommended the princes and magistrates to imitate the wisdom and charity of the inhabitants of Leisnitz, and to retain the property of the church as a common fund, belonging to the body of the faithful, and applicable to pious purposes. In respect to the cathedral churches, he proposed to make over their revenues in fief to the bishops, as laymen, seeing that they were practically so, or else to give them back to the heirs of the founders—or, in cases where neither of these arrangements might be expedient, to throw them into the common treasury

of the church. We shall have occasion to return to this subject. At present it is sufficient to notice the early interference of Luther in this question, and by showing what his principles really were—not indeed to defend them—but to justify him from any imputation of personal interestedness, from any contempt of the vested rights even of the bitterest of his enemies, and from any general disposition to sacrifice the property of the church and poor to the rapacity of the rich and great. Yet his proposed application of the cathedral revenues is not by any means free from the last suspicion.

We shall pass over the military contest which took place at this time between the Archbishop of Treves and Francis of Sickingen, and which deprived the Reformation of one of the most zealous of its secular supporters; because this war was not in fact connected with the cause of Luther. But another effusion of blood, after a fashion not yet disused by Rome—of the blood of her recusants by the hands of her ministers and patrons—the first deliberate act of sanguinary persecution, must be recorded, however painful the office, with some few particulars. George of Saxony, increasing in fury as the struggle advanced, and irritated by the personal insults of his adversary as well as by the contumacy of his subjects, overstepped the more moderate limits to which he had hitherto confined his vengeance, and proceeded to execute the last inflictions. Exile, imprisonment, pecuniary fines had for some time been attempted in vain; he had now recourse to the punishment of death. And not he alone even among the princes of Germany. In the electorate of Mayence, at Eslingen, at Augsburg, and at Worms the same extremities, were adopted, and without the absolute visitation of civil war, the prophetic anathema of Aleander was hastening to its accomplishment.

Meanwhile that faithful nuncio, still attached to the

court of Charles, was directing the work with his own hand in various cities of the Low Countries. His violence was especially turned against the Augustinians of Antwerp, whose establishment he entirely destroyed, and other apostate monks. Many yielded to the measures employed to terrify or seduce them, and returned to their allegiance. But there were three who still resisted. These it was deemed expedient to sacrifice; and that the expected effect of this example might be general, it was determined to give great publicity to their execution. Accordingly, they were carried to Brussels and condemned to be burnt alive. On the appointed day (the 1st of July, 1523), in the presence of a great concourse of spectators, especially theological professors, mitred abbots, bishops, and other dignitaries, they were brought to the place of execution; they were degraded from their order; they were led to the pile; and there, with some exclamations of holy joy and many of religious resignation, protesting their faith and their obedience with fervent and devoted constancy, they endured, or rather embraced, their fate.*

These were the first distinguished martyrs of the Reformation; and their sufferings, their firmness and their piety deserve a larger space than is here assigned to them. As to the effect of this measure, it was no more than another confirmation of the first lesson that we gather from the history of persecution. The city of

* “*Magis ipsi palos amplectentes quam alligati.*” Two only were executed on this occasion, Henry Voës and John Esch, or Nesse, or, as Seckendorf conjectures, Von Esse. It is to be hoped that the desire of human celebrity did not mingle with the motives of this last seeing that his very name is matter of conjecture. The third, named Lambert, suffered the same fate four days afterwards. Scultetus (Ann. 1523, p. 178, et seq.) gives a long account of this transaction from an epistle of a “*Vir Doctus,*” an eye-witness, dated *Bruxellæ, 6to. idus Julii.*

Brussels, which was compelled to be a witness of this act, and which had hitherto maintained its fidelity to Rome, was converted by the spectacle, and began to favour the Reformation.*

Luther did not overlook so propitious an opportunity. He composed a German hymn, in memory of the martyrdom, which continued long afterwards to be chanted in the church; and he addressed a pious exhortation to the inhabitants of that country, urging them to persevere with fortitude, and to render thanks to that merciful God, who had deigned to consecrate the harvest of his ministers upon earth by the oblation of such holy first-fruits.†

* This is concisely expressed by Erasmus. "Bruxellæ primum exusti sunt duo; tum demum civitas incipit favere Luthero. Epist. 7. Lib. xxi. In another Epistle he remarks the same fact at greater length. Again, the reformers were severely oppressed by Prince George at Leipzig: the consequence was, that a great proportion of the students left that university and removed to Wittemberg. Seckend. lib. i. sect. 55, § cxxxix.

† The title of Luther's Hymn gives the credit of the execution to the "Sophists of Louvain." Ein lied von den zweien Märtyren zu Brüssel, von den Sophisten von Löwen verbrandt, geschehen im yahr 1523.

Ein neues lied wir heben an,
Das walt Gott unser Herre,
Zu singen, was Gott hat gethan
In seinem lob und ehre. . . .

Ap. Marhein., t. ii. kap. ii.

CHAPTER XIX.

POPE CLEMENT VII.—DIET OF NUREMBERG.

Death of Adrian VI., and universal joy occasioned by it—succession of Clement VII., and return to the old policy—Campeggio sent to Nuremberg—his reception at Augsburg—the policy of the Vatican—how defended—exertions of Campeggio—his arguments—and reply of the Diet—constitution of the parties—how variously broken up—the consequent character of the edict—its substance—the Legate previously remonstrates, and presents his own scheme of reformation—it is ridiculed and despised—the Edict satisfies neither party—the Pope abuses it—so does the Emperor—so does Luther—Clement tries his second scheme—forms a confederacy at Ratisbon in his favour—names of the members—they accept Campeggio's reformation—remarks on this—the Imperial Regency changed and removed from Nuremberg to Eslingen—henceforward the history of the Reformation has a more political and a less religious character—and this was advantageous to the Pope.

ADRIAN VI., after passing exactly one year of disquietude and infelicity in the chair of St. Peter, died on the 24th of September, 1523. His monumental inscription* still attests, in a few eloquent words, the disappointment of his hopes and the honesty of his purposes, and his unfitness through that very honesty for the office to which he was called. During his life he was defeated in all his schemes, though some of them were projected with the best intentions, and on principles which were virtuous, and which, a century earlier, would have been wise. At Rome his plans of reformation were foiled and scouted,

* "Hadrianus VI. hic situs est, qui nihil sibi infelicius in vita duxit quam quod imperaret."

and this could scarcely surprise him ; but it must have been more afflicting to witness the entire discomfiture of his German policy ; to see his sincerity suspected, his candour employed as a weapon against himself, and the heretic, whom he was thirsting to destroy, grown stronger and bolder from the conflict. His death was a subject for universal joy. A profound theologian, a rigid moralist and a bigoted churchman, he was pursued by the court and people of Rome with a bitterness of detestation and contempt, which seldom attaches to the vilest characters—so hateful was the very name of reform in the metropolis of impurity, that the Pope himself was deemed a traitor to his church, if he attempted to touch even the slightest shred of its abominations.

Julius de Medicis, Clement VII., was chosen as his successor, and the policy of the Vatican then returned, after this transient interruption, into its ordinary channel. Frederick was again addressed in the usual style of unmeaning courtesy ; the very name and thought of reform were dismissed from the precincts of the apostolical councils ; the expectations of the discontented were to be again disappointed ; the demands for a general council again eluded ; and an accomplished instrument for all these purposes was selected in the person of Lorenzo Campeggio, and sent as nuncio to the Diet again assembled at Nuremberg.

The day appointed for its meeting was November 11, 1523, but the Legate did not arrive till the 14th of February following. In the course of his journey he had an opportunity of acquiring some experience as to the feelings of the German nation, had he chosen to profit by it. On his entrance into Augsburg he gave, as was customary, his benediction to the multitude ; but instead of the customary reverence on their part, he received only expressions of contempt and ridicule. He might

have read in this insult the exasperation and the confidence of the people. He might have learnt that, even should he win the suffrages of the princes, the strong hold of his enemy would still remain unshaken.* He only learnt that it would be more prudent to dispense with that ceremony on his entrance into Nuremberg; and accordingly he presented himself there without any official pomp, in his travelling costume, and proceeded directly to his hotel. The senate, or town-council, of that city was strongly attached to the principles of Luther. The preachers, many of whom were monks, were of the same party. The Augustinians were so decided in their resolution, that they administered the sacrament in both kinds in the church of their monastery, during the Easter following, to more than four thousand communicants; and even the Dominicans had adopted, though not perhaps to the same extent, the same opinions. Some faint attempts were made by some of the assembled potentates to repress this spirit. But they were wholly ineffectual, and the presence of the Legate excited irritation rather than dismay among the inhabitants, their magistrates and their teachers.

But the diplomacy of the Vatican was calculated for the councils of sovereigns; it took no cognisance of the feelings of the people; it did not acknowledge them as any element in the system of international intercourse; it had ever been habituated to conclude, that where the

* Admitting the insubordination, he exhorted the princes to put it down by force. In a letter to Frederick written at this Diet he remarked; "It is very true that Germany has lately undergone a great change; but the change is in the vulgar, not apparently in the princes. . . . It is time for the princes to repress these first menaces of sedition before they become more dangerous—*ut populi licentiam non solum moleste ferat magistratus, sed etiam masculine ulciscatur. Hanc autem disciplinæ severitatem in ipsius provincia imprimis exercendam esse.* . . ."

prince was gained all was gained—that the prison, the sword and the faggot would accomplish the rest; and thus Campeggio proceeded to execute, by the old consecrated methods of intrigue, cajolery and dissimulation, the counsels of his master. They were simply these: to refuse every shadow of concession, so far as the court was concerned, on the part of Rome; and to induce the potentates to enforce, by every means in their power, the edict of Worms. For this latter purpose it was of course his first object to unite all the princes in one determination to act vigorously, each in his own dominions, for the extirpation of the heresy; but should this fail, he had, as we shall presently observe, a second project in reserve—to band together the powers which were favourable to Rome, and by that league, if possible, to overwhelm the rest. Thus philanthropic and benevolent towards the Christian people of Germany were the dispositions which the representative of Christ's catholic church brought along with him to the approaching negotiations! That which was only the aspiration of Aleander was already become the policy of Campeggio.

Of course, the Pope justified his obduracy by the ordinary pretences set up by the patrons of corruption in every age—that one demand is only a prelude to another; that the first concession necessarily entails the second; that the claims, which are granted under certain circumstances, cannot be refused under others; and that it is wiser to fight the battle of self-interest at the most remote outposts, than to withdraw one footstep, even though it be to stronger and more tenable ground. The question of the justice of the demands was never for a moment considered; the only point at issue was whether the church of Rome could any longer be maintained by any exercise of despotism, by any severity of persecution, in

the full integrity of all her actual power, possessions and prerogatives, or not.

Accordingly Campeggio was no less assiduous than he was artful in his attempts to win the assembly. By frequent and private conferences with the leading individuals he prepared their minds for the approbation of his public address. He appealed to their prejudices and to their passions; he reminded them that the faith, which he called on them to protect, was that in which their venerable forefathers had lived and died; he sneered at the insignificance of the individuals who had presumed to violate it; he painted the fearful and certain progress of innovation—how it advanced insatiably from one conquest to another, so that ecclesiastical insubordination would unavoidably be followed by civil sedition, and the rabble which had insulted its priests would not long refrain from the blood of its princes; he drew an argument even from the recent triumphs and menaced invasion of the Turks; and represented the necessity of first securing the religious unity and purity of Germany, before the aid of God could be invoked with any confidence against the external outrages of the infidel.

The principles contained in this address received a ready sympathy from the spiritual princes and nobles, who formed a large portion of the assembly. The extinction of the heresy was with them at least as important a matter as the repulse of the Mussulman—in fact it was a nearer and far more pressing danger; and there was one among them (the bishop of Gurck) who had the rashness to avow, that the extermination of the Lutherans was in his mind far more necessary than that of the Turks, and a much worthier object for the contributions of the faithful. This was the true interpretation of the counsels of Campeggio; only the craftier

Italian found it safer to insinuate a sentiment, which could only excite disgust in every generous bosom, and to leave to some less discreet adherent the odium of proclaiming it.

Yet, notwithstanding his own exertions and the zeal of his supporters, the official reply which he received was not such as to promise him perfect contentment. He was requested to communicate to the Diet some satisfactory answer, on the part of the Pope, to the remonstrances contained in its last decree, and to the long list of grievances which had been presented to his predecessor by the German nation. Campeggio professed to have very little knowledge of those documents. At Rome, he said, though some copies might be found in the hands of individuals, they were not considered as authorised acts officially addressed by the Germanic body to the Pope and his cardinals, but as the mere declaration of a passionate faction, alike unbecoming the dignity of the empire and of the See; but at the same time he desired to recal their recollection to another edict, of unquestionable authority, which had received the sanction of a diet where the Emperor himself presided—the edict of Worms; and he then pressed for its immediate execution, on the ground that it was the simpler method of accomplishing the end at which both parties professed to aim—the pacification of the empire.

The assembly then proceeded to draw up its edict, amidst the greatest discord and confusion. The Archduke Ferdinand, president of the Diet and brother of the Emperor, declared his decided adhesion to the papal faction; so did the ambassador of Charles, the Duke of Bavaria and other secular members of considerable influence. The prelates, who assembled in all their force,

were unanimous on the same side,* and rose in violence and clamour as the debate proceeded. The higher ranks of the nobility were, to a great extent, with them. The opposite party was almost entirely composed of the counts of the empire and the representatives of the imperial cities, supported, if not conducted, by the ambassador of the Elector of Saxony. The struggle was severe; and, had the secular grandees of Germany loved the court of Rome as sincerely as they hated its Lutheran foes, the legate might have obtained a temporary triumph. But these were for the most part influenced by two scarcely consistent motives: they were willing to co-operate with the one party in effecting the overthrow of Luther, but they sympathised with the other in their wish for the humiliation of Rome.

Even at this crisis there was a pecuniary dispute between the ecclesiastical and secular papists. Ferdinand had demanded from the former, under the authority of the Pope, a third part of one year's income for the expenses of the Turkish war. The prelates had resolutely refused, and made a protest against the claim, and the question was still pending; and, besides this particular quarrel, there were many general subjects of variance and jealousy, even among the most zealous members of that party.

On the other side, the friends of the Reformation did not yet understand their own principles. Many upheld it, not because they loved either Luther or his cause, but because they hated the papal imposts. There were others who supported the Reformer on temporal grounds,

* The princes present were Louis Palatine, William and Louis of Bavaria, Frederick Palatine, Casimir of Brandenburg, Albert of Brandenburg, and the prelates of Treves, Bamberg, Wurtzburg, Trent, and Brixen.—Sleidan, lib. iv.

as a mighty agent for the emancipation of his country and his church; and there may have been some few, who carried an evangelical spirit into that great assembly, and acted on religious convictions—yet even these not perhaps altogether such as constituted the faith of Luther. Among the members met to decide this question, there may not have been one German who was in all particulars a papal devotee, nor one who could be properly called a disciple of Luther. Hence resulted the mixed character of the decree, which, after indescribable disorder, was, on the 18th of April, 1524, at last carried.

It was to this effect: That the states of the empire, in obedience to the wishes of the Emperor, should use their utmost exertions for the execution of the Edict of Worms, referring, as far as might be possible, in case any obstacles should arise, to the regency of the empire; that the Pope should immediately assemble a free council for the determination of religious differences; that the Diet should meet again at Spires on the 10th of the November following, and take such cognisance of those differences as by right belonged to it; that, meanwhile, a commission of certain learned doctors, elected by every prince in his own states, should be appointed to examine the writings of the modern teachers, and report upon them; that the same doctors should have the additional office of examining the grievances which the secular princes had presented against the Pope and the hierarchy, and suggest means of reconciliation; that the ensuing Diet should form its final resolution on their report; and that the Gospel should be preached meanwhile, according to the authorised interpretations.

The legate, to whom the substance of ~~this~~ decree was previously communicated, remonstrated in the strongest terms against it. His various objections need not be detailed, as they were founded on principles

already familiar to the reader. He interspersed, as usual, promises with his remonstrances; he asserted that his own authority as nuncio was sufficient for the abolition of all acknowledged grievances, and that he was most willing to apply it to that purpose; nay, he even carried his duplicity so far as to affect a certain zeal for reform, and was not ashamed to propound *his* project to the assembled princes. It consisted of thirty-five articles, of which all that were not absolutely frivolous were directed against the offences of the inferior clergy.*

This papal scheme of eluding the reality of Reformation by substituting its shadow—this hierarchical scheme of casting upon the lower ranks of the profession the scandal and the shame which attached, even in a greater degree, to the highest—of curbing and chastising humble transgressors while the ringleaders were to riot, as heretofore, in licentiousness and impunity—this poor device of selfish hypocrisy did not really deceive any one, even in that generation. By the people it was received with mere derision; it occasioned many humorous compositions, jests, satires, pasquinades, and brought out all the artillery of ridicule. Even the princes and nobles were not thus easily gulled; and being now more than ever assured that the imposts, which impoverished them and their subjects for the profit of Rome, and which in the eyes of most of them formed the sum and substance of their wrongs, would never be removed by Roman hands, they persisted in their determination to seek re-

* “Vivant honeste, vestiantur decore, non negotientur, fugiant cauponas, non sint avari, neque pro sacrorum administratione pecuniam acerbè impetrent; concubinarij removeantur loco, feriarum numerus sit moderatus.”—Sleidan, lib. iv. Magic and divination were likewise prohibited to spiritual persons. It appears that this “reform” was presented by Campeggio to the Diet, in full discharge of all claims upon Rome, and was instantly refused.

dress by other means. They retracted no part of their proposed decree. It was prepared accordingly, and published at the re-assembling of the Diet on the 18th of April.

It gave satisfaction to neither party. On the contrary it called forth from the leaders of both strong expressions of disapproval. Clement trembled. The very mention of the intended assembly at Spires—an ecclesiastical tribunal independent of the Pope—a court to be summoned by laymen for the decision of a spiritual controversy—filled him with an anxiety which he called indignation. The Emperor, whom civil dissension still detained in Spain, finding his interest at that moment in an alliance with the Pope, and having already enlisted his feelings on the same side, threw off the show of impartiality and even moderation, and spoke the very language that would have been dictated from the Vatican. In a letter written from Burgos, on the 15th of the July following, to the Orders of the empire,* he so far outstepped his discretion, if he did not exceed his authority, as to annul some provisions of the decree of Nuremberg. He expressed his astonishment that the convocation of a general council, which belonged only to himself and the Pope, should have been treated in that assembly. He cancelled the proposed commission of doctors, and prohibited the assembly convened for the November following at Spires, and proclaimed himself the protector and patron of the pontifical church. Luther he denounced by name as a crafty and unchristian man, whose object, like that of Mahomet, was to make for himself a name and a sect, though it should be at the expense of the

* Sleidan (lib. iv. A.D. 1524) mentions that he wrote at the same time private letters to the same effect to certain members of the Diet (Frederick was one of these) as well as to the senate of Strasburg.

happiness of mankind ; and he called for the obsequious execution of the Edict of Worms. It is said that, in transmitting to Germany a document offensive to the rights of the nation and the independence of the Diet, he so far remembered his caution as to desire Ferdinand not to make it public, unless it would probably prove acceptable to the Germanic body ; but Ferdinand was now a partisan, and perceiving how it would gratify his own faction, he promulgated it. Its general effect, however, was only to hurt the national pride and irritate the free spirit both of the nobles and people ; and the greater number at once replied to Ferdinand, that they found it impossible to execute the edict in question. .

It may seem strange that the decree, which thus exasperated the Emperor, should have awakened the same indignation in Luther. To him the revolting article was that which revived the edict of Worms ; and he denounced, with even more than his accustomed fury, the stupidity, the madness, the barbarity of all who should attempt to enforce it. He exposed the imperial inconsistency, which at one moment published a sentence of condemnation against him, and at another commanded him to wait till a council should assemble and pronounce upon him.* He deplored the blindness of the potentates of his country, who, while they still listened to the oft-detected perjuries of Rome, were preparing to oppose by force the fixed determination of the people ; and he went so far as to exhort the states of the empire to abstain from aggressions against the Turk ; since he was more moderate in his councils than the princes of Christendom, and since no heavenly blessing

* He published side by side the edicts of Worms and the second of Nuremberg, under the title, "Zwei Kaiserliche uneinige und widerwärtige Gebote."

could be expected upon any enterprise undertaken by men so sinful.

Meanwhile Pope Clement, sensible that he had been foiled at Nuremberg, and resolved to repair his defeat, had recourse to the second expedient of his policy. His first endeavour had been to gain to his views the great mass of the Germanic body, and to urge it to proceed by an official, if not an unanimous, act, to the extinction of the heresy. But when this failed, and when he perceived too, not only the great zeal of the open friends of Luther, but also the determination of many who were not his friends to obtain the redress of their spiritual grievances, he despaired of ever uniting the powers of Germany in his cause. It became his object then to divide them; and by striking the first blow at once, while the passions were heated and recent from the dispute, to compromise at least a powerful party in his interests.

Campeggio received instructions to that effect; and so well did he execute them that, on the 10th of July following, a league was signed at Ratisbon among the most determined enemies of the Reformation. The parties to it were these:—Archduke Ferdinand, the Archdukes William and Louis of Bavaria, the Archbishop of Saltzburg, the Bishops of Trent, Ratisbon, Bamberg, Spires, Strasburg, Augsburg, Constance, Basil, Freisingen, Passau and Brixen. These confederates immediately published a proclamation of the terms of their alliance, among which the principal were these:—To execute with all their power the edict of Worms; to permit no change in the sacraments, or in any of the ordinances and practices of the church; to punish priests who had married, and monks who had deserted their convents; to have the Gospel expounded according to the interpretation of the fathers and other authorised

doctors; to prohibit the sale of the books of Luther;* to recal all the youths who were studying at Wittemberg, on pain of confiscation; to exclude from benefices and academies all who had studied there; to refuse a refuge to any one banished from the states of another for Lutheranism; to afford mutual aid in case of any insurrection occasioned by these measures. At the same time, as a sort of counterpoise against the Hundred Grievances, they expressed their satisfaction with the scheme of reformation proposed by Campeggio; which was vaunted indeed by the legate himself as a complete and final measure, calculated to fulfil every expectation and to silence all the clamours of the discontented.

It was natural enough that an association of fifteen persons, twelve of whom were prelates of a corrupt church, should give their sanction to a project which threw upon their inferiors the suffering and the shame, and left untouched the power, the wealth, the luxuries and the vices of the hierarchy. But it was a somewhat audacious proceeding for a confederacy, which did not comprise the sixth part of the Germanic body, to adopt an independent course of policy on a question frequently discussed and officially decided; to publish a partial and local edict in contravention of that so lately promulgated by the universal assembly of the nation; and to assume for a defeated minority the right of separate and opposite action in the very matters so decided.

It established at the same time a very dangerous precedent; for the example which was set by one party was sure to be followed by the other, and thus would ensue a certain series of dissensions and disorders threatening the final dissolution of the Germanic body, and disturbing

* Scultetus, ann. 1524.

the peace and destroying the happiness of the empire. But neither the happiness of the empire, nor the peace of Christendom, nor the interests of humanity, nor any other interests, save those of the treasury and the tyranny of the apostolical church, entered in any degree into the consideration of the Italian representative of Rome. It was his simple object to preserve, at any cost to others, the wealth and dignity of his establishment.

Assuredly, under existing circumstances, the policy then adopted presented the best chance of success. Yet how loose must have been the constitution of that empire, in which a foreigner, ignorant of the language and despising the character of its subjects, acquired the power of forming a league of partisans banded together for purposes anti-national, and in defiance of the resolutions of the national assembly !

Another intrigue of the nuncio was equally successful. The imperial regency, hitherto assembled at Nuremberg, was accused by the papal party of a secret inclination towards the cause of Luther. Certainly it had not authorised those extreme measures of persecution, of which the impolicy was as obvious as the cruelty, but which the high church faction never ceased to recommend. Under the pretence, that the funds for the maintenance of this regency were exhausted, means were found to dissolve it. But no sooner was this accomplished than another, composed of members notoriously adverse to the Reformation, was appointed in its place; and, since the city of Nuremberg was tainted with that leprosy, the seat of its deliberations was fixed at Eslingen, a town in the duchy of Wirtemberg, at that time under the government of Ferdinand. Frederick protested in the strongest language against this new council, and boldly disputed its authority, but it assembled and acted notwithstanding.

Thus the policy of Clement, administered by the talents of Campeggio, already bore considerable fruits. The second edict of Nuremberg, though by no means such as the papists wished, was however less unfavourable than the first. The Emperor, from whatsoever motives, had declared more loudly his adhesion to the cause of Rome. The confidence of the prelates, which had been shaken by the indiscretion of Adrian, was restored. The imperial regency was purified, and brought into direct co-operation with the pontifical agents; and a friendly coalition was established which, though not in itself very powerful, might presently become the focus of a more general confederacy—a rallying point for future and bolder operations. And by this last success the Catholics indeed achieved one great advantage: they altered the character of the Reformation; they made it less a matter of religion, more a question of politics; to a certain extent they dispiritualised it; and by a measure, which threatened to reduce it to a struggle between princes, they not only checked its progress and narrowed its limits, but really endangered the main support of its existence, which was the independent enthusiasm of the multitude.

CHAPTER XX.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION.—CARLSTADT.

The Reformation is adopted by Albert of Brandenburg—the Bishops of Samland and Breslau—the Elector and Count Palatine—the Landgrave of Hesse—by a great number of cities and provinces—by Magdeburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Frankfort—dispute at Strasburg about the marriage of the clergy—appeal of the bishop to Campeggio—the legate's answer—result—escape of nine nuns from the convent of Nimpschen—consigned to Luther—his generous treatment of them—revenues of the monastery of Heitzberg—Luther's appeal to Frederick—Luther's own monastery is forsaken—some absurd opinions rise among the reformers—opposed by Luther—origin of the sacramentary controversy—Carlstadt's proceedings at Orlamund—Luther sent to repress them—he preaches against Carlstadt at Jena—their interview—Luther proceeds to Orlamund—his hostile reception and hasty escape—exile of Carlstadt and sympathy of his parishioners—controversy between him and Luther—Luther's letter to the Strasburgers—remarks—further extracts from it—Luther's professed wish not to believe the real presence—his general invective against Carlstadt—his seeming inconsistency—his tract against the celestial prophets—attempt of the Strasburgers to heal the controversy—rejected by Luther—result of this—Carlstadt makes overtures to the Elector—rejected—he wanders into different parts of Germany—among the fanatics and insurgents—his danger—appeal to Luther—through whose mediation he at last returns to Saxony, and makes a public recantation.

WHILE the intrigues of Campeggio, working upon the passions and prejudices and personal objects of certain powerful individuals, were forming a party among them for the suppression of the new opinions, these were spreading day by day among the mass of the community, and striking deeper and deeper into the affections of the people. And, as on all occasions of great

popular excitement, some among the great will always be found who share the emotion, or who serve their interests by pretending to share it, so were there in this instance some chiefs and nobles who placed themselves, in their respective dominions, at the head of the movement.

Albert of Brandenburg, grand master of Prussia, declared in 1523, or early in 1524, his adhesion to the Reformation. He conferred a vacant See upon Paul Spretter, or Speratus, who had been personally recommended to him by Luther; and under that pious superintendence the Gospel was securely and successfully preached by a zealous band of missionaries and converts.

In January, 1524, George Polentz, Bishop of Samland, promulgated a bull favourable to the Reformation, in which he directed the office of baptism to be performed in the German language, and authorised the reading of Luther's books. A few days earlier Maurice, Bishop of Ermeland, had issued an edict to the opposite effect. Luther immediately published the two bulls, together with a short preface, in which he set forth, as he was wont, the incurable malignity of the papists.*

The Bishop of Breslau, John Thurson, a man of great holiness and a correspondent of Erasmus, had ventured to favour, even in its feeblest infancy, the cause of Luther. He died in 1520, and the beautiful expressions by which Luther consoled his last moments are still extant.† James of Saltza succeeded to his chair and to his prin-

* "Duæ episcopales bullæ, prior pii, posterior papistici pontificia, super doctrina Lutherana et Romana. Has duas bullas, diverso spiritu editas, placuit invulgari, velut duos fructus insignes, alterum refflorescentis pietatis, alterum inveteratæ malitiæ."—Luth. Oper., tom. iii. fol. 62.

† Scultetus, Annal. Evangel. Ann. 1520.

ciples. The magistrates co-operated with the bishop. A public disputation was held, in 1521, on some of the most important points of difference, both in doctrine and discipline; and it was conducted for the space of eight days, with so much detriment to the papal interests, that the liberty of the preachers and the apostacy of the people were presently made subjects of a remonstrance from Rome. The authorities, to whom the complaints were addressed, replied with firmness and knowledge; and it is proper to observe, that, among many grounds of justification, that which they most strongly urged was the disgusting impurity and indecency of their former pastors.

A long German letter is extant, addressed by Luther, on Sept. 7, 1523, to Charles, Duke of Savoy, exhorting him to protect the ministers of the Gospel, as he had already done, not by the sword—for that was not the weapon of truth—but merely by granting them free permission to preach the word of God. But the effect of this communication is not recorded. Frederick, Elector Palatine, and Louis, Count Palatine, encouraged the progress of the new opinions in their respective states, and introduced Schonbelius, a name of distinction among the early Reformers, as their principal instrument. In 1524 (on July 18) the Landgrave of Hesse published an edict, in which he commanded all the pastors in his states to preach the Gospel, according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. He prohibited at the same time the mendicity of the monks, which was one of the great practical evils and scandals of the ancient system. This proclamation was accepted by the Reformers as a proof of attachment to their principles, and a pledge of future adhesion to their party.

But these and similar instances, in which the Reform-

ation derived strength from the patronage of princes, were rare compared with those in which it took root and flourished without any such assistance, through its own direct operation upon the hearts of the people.

Among the various places of importance, where it was established during the years 1523 and 1524, we may enumerate Francfort-on-the-Maine, Milteberg, Strasburg, Ulm and Halle in Swabia; Bremen and Magdeburg; Goldberg in the Archduchy of Liegnitz; Zerbst in the principality of Anhalt; Hamburg; Stettin and Sunda and Stolpen in Pomerania; and the duchies of Mecklenburg and of Holstein. Teachers instructed in the schools of Wittemberg were sought by the convents of Friezland, Westphalia, Livonia,* and other provinces; and so great was the diffusion of the evangelical light, as almost to justify the boast of Matthias Cellius, "that there was not a city, town, assembly, monastery, academy, chapter, nay, not a family or house, in which there might not be found some adherents of Luther."†

The religious revolution at Magdeburg was accomplished in the following manner. Three evangelical teachers, Melchior Myricius, Eberhard Widensee, and John Frizhans, a Franciscan monk, produced, by their preaching and writing, a deep effect on the minds of the citizens, and roused them to action. On the 23rd

* There is a letter of Luther to the Livonians, written in January, 1523, in which he strongly impresses "Faith in Christ as the foundation of all Christianity—and then love for your neighbour. But as for the barter of indulgences, the worship of saints, and all those other works which are inculcated as salutary—escape and fly away from them as from the most deadly and immediate poison."

† It was admitted by Campeggio that Luther was a good deal read at Venice. To the places here mentioned Maimburg adds the duchies of Lunenburg and Holstein, the cities of Wismar and Rostock, and the whole coast of the Baltic.

of June, 1524, they assembled in the Augustinian monastery, and drew up a petition for the approbation of the senate. It contained these articles: That the word of God should be preached in its uncorrupted purity, and the eucharist administered in both kinds; that the sacrifice of the mass should be abolished; that the revenues of the old foundations should be thrown into the ecclesiastical treasury; that priests and monks should have pensions for life, on condition however of their receiving instruction in the evangelical doctrine; that marriage should be permitted to the clergy; that the sacraments should be administered gratuitously, and mendicants expelled. The senate consented to this address, and commanded the immediate execution of all the provisions contained in it. At the same time, they despatched deputies to acquaint the Elector of Saxony with this proceeding, and to request that Amsdorf might be sent to direct their future steps. Amsdorf received his commission, and was especially instructed to prevent any disorderly expression of popular feeling. Notwithstanding, some outrages were committed, which furnished the canons of the cathedral, the strenuous enemies of the change, sufficient grounds for an appeal to the Regency. Rigorous proclamations were issued in consequence (on Sept. 6), and some of the principal magistrates were summoned by name, as liable to the penalties of the Edict of Worms. As a reply to this summons, the senate opened a negotiation with the Elector of Saxony, equipped a considerable body of cavalry and made preparations to sustain a siege, rather than return under the dominion of Rome.

Nearly the same was the origin of the Reformation at Nuremberg, which took place about four months afterwards. The preachers, the chief of whom was

named Osiander,* persuaded the people; the people petitioned the senate; and the senate, without any recorded reluctance, consented. The articles of the petition were somewhat different from those at Magdeburg, for in so immense a field for the selection of abuses, it was not probable that all would choose the same. The bolder reformers of Nuremberg composed a longer list of grievances and superstitions, accounting among the latter, private masses, purgatory and the worship of the Virgin. And at the same time they protested with great force, not only against the notorious impostures of the clergy, but against the wickedness of employing violence and persecution in the support of fraud.

At Ulm the people were in like manner instructed by teachers, educated at Wittemberg, or formed by the writings of Luther. Here it proved that the senate resisted the first application of the citizens. But as the feeling grew stronger, it yielded in the following year, 1524, and authorised the changes demanded. At Frankfurt, the circumstances, essentially the same, were varied by the zealous co-operation of a layman of rank and eloquence, Hartmuth of Kronenberg, who both preached and wrote with great vigour and effect against the common enemy. This brief enumeration of the names is confined, as the reader will observe, to the converts of Germany.

* Andrew Osiander was then only five-and-twenty years of age. He was a native of Bavaria, and had studied theology at Wittemberg. From Nuremberg he passed to reside in Prussia; where, much later in life, he engaged in a long dispute with his brother reformers, respecting justification, which was denominated, by an equivocal compliment to its author, "The Osiandric War—*Bellum Osiandricum*;" and which survived its author for sixteen years (till 1566—he died in 1552). He seems to have possessed considerable talents and learning, with an impetuous temper, which sometimes carried him into error. Melchior Adam. *Vita Osiandri*.

Of the practical innovations now generally introduced, those which gave the greatest scandal to the dominant party were the apostacy of the monks, and the marriage of the clergy; and in the various local attempts, which were made to subdue the Reformers, these two commonly appeared as their prominent offences. This was natural; since the clergy were certainly the last who might have been expected to set at defiance the ecclesiastical discipline; and the monks, who were especially the soldiers and champions of the Pope and had found their account in that service, were held ungrateful and unpardonable deserters from his camp.

Respecting the latter of these transgressions, a singular dispute occurred at Strasburg, in April, 1523, which placed the principles of the Roman Catholic Church in so strong a contrast with those of the Reformers, that it becomes proper to notice it more in detail than the plan of this history will generally permit. A pastor* of one of the churches in that city, whose name was Anthony, married at this time a girl, with whom he had for some years lived in notorious concubinage, seemingly without any reprehension from the ecclesiastical authorities. The

* “*Hodie apud nos mira et incredita res acta. Nam quæ Christiana sunt rara apud nos hactenus fuere. M. Antonius, Parochus olim S. Stephani, nunc St. Thomæ, aliquot annos scortillum apud se habuit, elegans sane et non vulgari forma. Hanc diebus superioribus uxorem duxit, ductamque e suggestu palam populo vulgavit. Hodie vero, 20 Aprilis, cum hæc scribimus, subque hanc horam, in templi foribus apud D. Laurentium per M. Matthiam Zellium habita concione ad plebem in matrimonii commendationem, publice introducit, ducentibus sponsam duabus honestissimis matribusfamilias, sequentibus vero omnis generis hominibus, mirificeque applaudentibus. Est autem hora diei 8 qua ingens hominum multitudo ad rem novam inauditamque occurrit. Tremunt papistæ. Exultant Christiani, et media plebe acclamat unus: Er hat ihm recht gethan. Gott geb ihm tausend guter jahr! Tu crede multos hunc secuturos esse.*”—Gerbelius to Schwebel. Strasburg, April 20. Apud Scultet. Ann. 1523. p. 168.

ceremony was performed with great publicity. A sermon was preached, in which the act was vindicated, and the same privilege claimed for all the priesthood; and the people, who were assembled in great numbers, gave their clamorous approbation to the new doctrine.

These circumstances made it impossible for the bishop to overlook the offence. Other priests had previously married, but with less provoking parade; in this case the insult was so notorious, that some attempt was necessary to enforce the canons, and preserve at least the semblance of dignity to the church. Accordingly, he summoned all the married priests before his tribunal—and that, be it observed, on the two-fold charge—that they had violated not only the canons of the church and the statutes of the empire, but also the ordinances of God and the honour of the sacerdotal office. The accused confined their defence to the latter and more serious imputation, and professed their desire to be judged on this ground, even though death should be the penalty, in case of condemnation. At the same time, instead of obeying the summons, they appealed to the senate, as their tribunal in this matter, and placed themselves at once under the protection of that body. The senate remonstrated with the bishop. It urged on his consideration—whether it were safe to chastise an act which had been openly applauded by the people; whether it were righteous to punish the marriage of the clergy, and to tolerate their concubinage; and it prayed him at least to suspend his sentence, till the Diet of Nuremberg should have come to some decision on the subject.

This led to a curious negotiation. The bishop laid a double complaint, both against the clergy and the magistrates, before the Legate at Nuremberg; and among several charges it was not the least serious—that

the priests had been adopted by the senate into the civil order, in contravention of the pontifical statutes. The magistrates justified their conduct, and by the highest reasons. They represented the infamous profligacy of the greater number of the priesthood resident among them, and the general corruption disseminated by that contagious example among the youth of their city. They denounced the injustice and impiety of proceeding with rigour against a breach of the Pope's law, and overlooking the habitual iniquities of proclaimed violators of the law of God; and they added that the indignation of the people was so violent against these last, as to make it easy to rouse them into open outrage.

The reply of Campeggio was remarkable. He did not take upon him to approve the concubinage of the clergy, or to sanction the connivance of the bishops. He admitted, that it had been usual for the German clergy to purchase from their bishops a licence to live in concubinage, and he condemned the practice; but he was not ashamed to declare that he held it to be a far more venial offence than their marriage.* His argument for this monstrous paradox amounted to this: the priest who married believed that the act was innocent; and thus, as he sinned in blindness, he persisted in his sin; whereas he who lived in concubinage was aware of his transgression and his danger, and might therefore turn to repentance. And after all, (he added with great simplicity,) it is not every one who possesses the gift of

* "Quod sacerdotes fiant mariti multo esse gravius peccatum, quam si plurimas domi meretrices alant; nam illos habere persuasum quasi recte faciunt, hos autem scire et peccatum agnoscere. Nec enim omnes ea esse qua fuit Johannes Baptista continentia. . . ."—Sleidan, lib. iv. m. d. 1524. The Bishop of Merseberg had made a similar declaration ten years before: "Es sey besser ein geistlicher hatte eine hüre, als eine frau," according to Marhein., tom. i. kap. xii.

continency like John the Baptist. . . . His impiety disgusted the honest senators of Strasburg more than his sophistry deceived them : but they were contented to propose, as a compromise, that they would prevent the future marriage of their clergy, if the legate would repress their impurities. So the matter rested. The offenders were protected, and the principles of the Reformation gained strength from the struggle. Indeed there was no place where the cause was more efficiently supported than at Strasburg. Bucer, Pollio, Crellius, Gaspar Hedio, and Capito, the two last of whom had recently abandoned the court of Mayence for the free profession of their principles, formed an evangelical band, such as could be boasted by no city except Wittenberg : and we observe accordingly that the new doctrines were in 1524 permanently established there.

The year 1523 produced again a new feature in the history of the Reformation. Hitherto the rebellion in the monastic establishments had been confined to their male inhabitants ; it now extended itself to the nuns. Nine of these recluses, all of them from the higher classes, deserted their convent, at a place called Nimptschen in Misnia, about the time of Easter ; and under the escort of some of the principal inhabitants of Torgau, who had abetted their escape, they were conducted to Wittenberg, and placed under the protection of Luther.

Luther is not charged with any share in this transaction ; nor is there any pretence for imputing licentious motives to any of the parties engaged in it : nevertheless, it exposed him to much misrepresentation and scandal, and his enemies lost not so fortunate an occasion for asserting or insinuating calumnies. Yet his conduct, in a somewhat difficult situation, was at once humane and manly. He did not, through any excess of

delicacy, refuse the charge imposed on him, but immediately proceeded to consult the interests of the fugitives. First he acquainted their parents and relatives with the circumstances, and solicited a refuge for them under the roofs of their natural guardians. This being at once refused, he cast upon the cruelty of the refusal the blame of all that might ensue; he prepared to provide for them according to the best of his power;* he secretly interested the Elector in their behalf, and even went so far as to justify their conduct by a public apology.† One of them was the celebrated Catharine of Bora, the future bride of Luther.

Our attention is again called to the subject of the ecclesiastical revenues. In 1523 the monastery of Herzberg, in the neighbourhood of Wittemberg, being entirely deserted by its inmates, the property devolved, at least in trust, to the Elector. Luther allowed not this circumstance to pass without remark. He immediately wrote to Spalatin on the subject, first expressing his confident assurance, that Frederic never would consent to

* Luther thus wrote to Spalatin on this occasion: "*Ad me venerunt novem istæ apostatæ moniales, vulgus miserabile, sed per honestos cives Torgaviensis advectæ. . . . Miseret me illarum valde; maxime autem et aliarum, quæ ubique in tanto numero pereunt, maledicta et incesta ista castitate. Sexus iste per sese longe infirmissimus, et ad virum natura imo divinitus conjunctus, tanta crudelitate separatus perditur. Oh tyrannos et crudeles parentes et cognatos in Germania! Sed te, papa et vos episcopi, quis digne maledicat? Quis vestram cæcitatem et furorem talia docentem et exigentem satis excretur? Sed hic non est locus. Quæris quid cum illis agam. Primum cognatis significabo, ut eas suscipiant: qui si nolint curabo eas alibi suscipi; nam est mihi promissio facta ab aliquibus. Aliquas etiam matrimonio jungam, ubi potero. Te autem oro ut tu opus charitatis facias, &c.*"—(April 10, 1523.) Sixteen others soon afterwards escaped from the convent of Widerstet in, the county of Mansfeld.

† Entitled "*Ursachen und antwort dags jungfrauen klöster göttlich verlassen mögen.*" It is in the form of a letter to Leonard Koppe, citizen of Torgau. (No. 486.)

confiscate that property, and next suggesting the justice of distributing among the late inhabitants of the convent the vases, ornaments and other valuables. In respect to the fixed revenues of the churches, he maintained that their first objects were the poor pastors who served them; that at any rate they could not honestly be employed for any except pious purposes; and he condemned, with his usual vehemence, the usurpation of any portion of the ecclesiastical funds, on that or any other occasion, whether by the local authorities, or by the public treasury. Yet he clearly foresaw that such scandals must arise even in an evangelical church; and he consoled himself by the reflection, that the converts of St. Paul himself had not been free from worldliness, and that it would be unfair to expect more purity in the revival of the Gospel than had distinguished its apostolical infancy.

In the following year the monastery of which he was himself a member was altogether abandoned. In this case he again committed the revenues to the charge of the Elector, only soliciting, on behalf of the prior, some compensation for the loss of his private patrimony, which he had sustained through his adhesion to the Gospel; for his estates, being situated in the dominions of the Archbishop of Treves, had been confiscated by that prince. The papists, who were so ready to object a lust for the ecclesiastical possessions as a leading motive with the Reformers, were not slow to set the example of such rapacity, whenever the occasion presented itself.

Among the large mass of persons, who had so suddenly shaken off an oppressive spiritual despotism, many were scarcely half enlightened, and all believed, as in fact all had been taught to believe, that they were qualified to reason on sacred subjects. Consequently, many differences immediately arose among them, and many absurd opinions were propounded. There were some

who thought it essential to restore the observances of the Mosaic law, and to abolish all the enactments of the pagan emperors. With many the canonical law was an object of especial abhorrence, because it had proceeded from the legislation of the Vatican. In the exuberance of evangelical zeal, many of the common practices of society were denounced as sinful, particularly those which were in any way connected with the principle of usury, so that all commercial transactions were involved in this condemnation.

Luther perceived at once the folly of such propositions and the ridicule which they threw upon his cause, and he disavowed and discouraged them accordingly. But, while he was thus wisely extinguishing these lesser differences, he permitted and even nourished the growth of one which was incomparably more dangerous, which involved a question of the highest theological importance, and which, after much obstinate dissension and bitterness of animosity, became at length the cause of a perpetual schism among the enemies of Rome. The principal circumstances of the Sacramentarian Controversy will be described in due season. At present I shall do no more than point out its origin, in the disputes so unhappily commenced and so intemperately conducted between Luther and Carlstadt.

When Carlstadt perceived that his influence at Wittenberg was entirely overthrown by the superior genius of his rival, he retired from that city, and was contented to continue his operations in a narrower field. He withdrew to a little town in Thuringia, in the electorate of Saxony, named Orlamund, whither he was invited by the inhabitants, to reside among them as their spiritual director. Here he not only persisted in his warfare against the images, but likewise broached a third opinion respecting the nature of the Eucharist. In opposition,

no less to the doctrine of Luther than to that of Rome, he denied the real bodily presence in the consecrated elements, asserting that it was only a figurative and representative presence. Some commotions, particularly against images, appear to have been excited, and he was summoned by the academical authorities to Wittenberg, to discharge in person the duties imposed on him by the offices which he held in the university.* He pleaded the superior claims of the souls committed to his charge; and his parishioners, whose affections he had entirely won, zealously supported him in his disobedience. In letters, which they addressed both to the Elector and the Chapter, they boldly maintained their divine right to choose their own pastor; and they objected, besides, not only to the orders of the university, but also to the acts and doctrine of Luther, as unrighteous and papistical.

This did not avail them; but Frederic, before he proceeded to any severity, probably fearing the suspected connexion between Carlstadt and Munzer, directed Luther to visit in person the seat of this insubordination, to ascertain its extent, and, if possible, to repress it. This, as it proved, was not a very prudent enterprise. Doubtless Luther counted on the force of his authority and eloquence, and expected his accustomed success. At Jena,† in his road to Orlamund, he preached (Aug. 22, 1524,) with great vehemence, and directed his fiercest denunciations against two sorts of fanaticism—that of the seditious enthusiasts who were now beginning to

* A lectureship and preachingship of which he received the salaries. Marhein., tom. ii. p. 141.

† There is a contemporary and tolerably fair account of this affair among the Autographa Reformatum under this title: "Wie sich Doctor Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt mit Doctor Martino Luther beredt zu einen Bund, wie sie wider einander zuschreiben sich entschlossen hatten—in 1524.

disturb the peace of Germany ; and that of the image-breakers.

Carlstadt was present ; and naturally interpreted the first of these invectives, no less than the second, as intended against himself. He instantly sought an interview with the preacher ; he professed the deepest indignation at the calumny ; he warmly disclaimed any communion, either of action or of principle, with the fanatics in question. Luther was compelled to admit his exculpation, so far at least as to acquit him of any deliberate association in their enterprises. But, in the same conference, which took place at the inn, he severely condemned his doctrine on the sacrament, and pledged himself, by the deposit of a piece of gold,* that, when any defence of it should be published, he would confute it. Then, notwithstanding some warnings of no friendly nature, he proceeded to Orlamund. The inhabitants assembled to meet him, with their pastor at their head ; and after a discussion, conducted apparently with little temper on either side, perceiving that the determination of the people was only irritated by the dispute, he hastily escaped from the place—without personal injury indeed, but with little advantage to his cause, or credit to himself. “ I saw very clearly,” thus he wrote not long afterwards to the people of Strasburg, “ what was the sort of seed which this accomplished teacher had been sowing

* The challenge with which he accompanied the deposit is said to have been : “ Nehmet ihn und greift mich nun tapfer an ! frisch auf mich ! ” Carlstadt then took it up and showed it to all present, and said : “ This is my arrhabo, in token of which I have power to write against Luther, and I beg you all to remember and bear witness to this.” This is the account of Martin Reinhard, a preacher of Jena, and a partisan of Carlstadt. But Scultetus likewise ascribes to Luther the blame of having provoked the controversy, and also asserts that his account of the affair was not altogether true. Annal. 1524, p. 228. All agree that he had a narrow escape at Orlamund.

at Orlamund. Indeed I had good reason to rejoice that I fortunately slipped away from among them with my life, and was not overwhelmed with stones and dirt. Some of them, as I was retiring, uttered the most horrid imprecations against me, and prayed God that I might break my neck before I could get away from the town. . . .”

It is a singular circumstance, that the only occasion on which the person of Luther was in any danger, or even subject to any serious insult, during the whole course of a life passed in contention with a most unscrupulous foe, should have been here—in the heart of Saxony, under the very eye of Frederick—and that this peril should have proceeded from a mob of compatriots, of reformers, acting under the guidance of one of the principal members of the University of Wittemberg, and that the very man, who first stepped forth to aid him, when he stood alone in the infancy of his cause.

Luther made his representation to the Elector. Carlstadt and his parishioners, on their side, sent up the strongest appeals, inflamed by much invective, to the same tribunal. Frederick decided in favour of the dominant party. Immediately (on Sept. 18, 1524) he banished Carlstadt from his territories, and rejected all the supplications of his followers. That injudicious innovator thus acquired another title to their affection. He claimed the glory of martyrdom; he described himself as the victim of injustice and persecution, and denounced his antagonist as his persecutor. He immediately wrote some moving letters to his late congregation, subscribing himself “Andreas, Bodenstein, Carolostadt,* unheard, unconvicted, banished by Martin Luther.” These were pub-

* Carlstadt was commonly nicknamed A B C, or the alphabet, from the three initials. We find constant allusion to this in the writers of that period.

licly read, to the toll of the bell,* amidst the tears and murmurs of a multitude of ardent evangelicals, to whom, notwithstanding, no name was so detestable as that of Luther. He for his part remarked, in a letter to Amsdorf, respecting this affair: "Matters are now, forsooth, greatly changed; since I, who ought to have been a martyr myself, am making martyrs of others."

Luther invariably denied that he was the author of Carlstadt's banishment, and declared that, though he was perfectly able to justify the act, yet, had he been Elector, it should not have been committed. Yet the very document which contained these assertions was not composed in a spirit at all calculated to accredit them. Carlstadt had retired to Strasburg, where he appears to have passed part of his time and part at Basle, in Switzerland; for in both those places the eucharistical opinions, for which he was supposed to be suffering, had some supporters.† Soon after his arrival he attacked,‡ with all the bitterness of an exile, not only the doctrine, but also the person of Luther, and, what must have delighted a Catholic spectator, he was not contented to stigmatise him as a persecutor, but proclaimed him besides—thus

* "Quæ publice vocatis per campanas lectæ sunt, omnibus simul flentibus."—Luther to Amsdorf, Oct. 27, 1524.

† If we are to believe Erasmus, all classes at Basle were yet opposed to them. In his letter to Hen. Stromer, Dec. 11, 1524, from Basle: "Carlostadius hic fuit. Excudit sex libellos. Duo qui excuderunt medius tertius conjecti sunt in carcerem jussu magistratus ob id potissimum, quod, ut audio, doceat in Eucharistia non esse verum corpus Domini. Hoc nemo fert. Indignantur laici sibi eripi Deum suum, quasi nusquam sit Deus, nisi sub illo signo. Docti commoventur verbis S. S. et Ecclesiæ Decretis. *Res hæc excitabit nobis magnam Tragædiam*, cum Tragædiarum plusquam satis sit." Why so, if there were no party which favoured the new opinion?

‡ "Von dem widerchristlichen Misbrauch des Herrn Brodt und Kelch. Anno 1524," was the title of one of his tracts.

early in the history of sectarian dissension—"to be a twofold papist, the cousin-german of Antichrist."*

Luther was irritated, and in that frame of mind he addressed (on December 15, 1524,) that epistle to the Strasburgers, which, whatever may have been its effect at the moment, has not increased his reputation either for charity or for candour with his posterity. "I rejoice," thus he said, in substance, "that Carlstadt has been banished from our country; and I shall heartily regret if he shall have any opportunity of displaying his wild and seditious spirit among you. However, had I been Duke of Saxony, he would never have been expelled by me, unless it had been out of compliance with the importunate entreaties of the people. But be not you, my friends, influenced by my indiscreet, nay, foolish good nature. Do you at least conduct yourselves like men of wisdom."... If many were disposed to ascribe Carlstadt's exile to the influence of Luther, the above expressions could not fail to confirm that suspicion. We observe besides that in the course of this epistle the opinions which the other disclaimed were skilfully mixed together with those which he avowed. In a tract, of which he alone was the real object, the fanaticism of the "Prophets" was denounced no less strongly than the fury of the Iconoclasts; and the error concerning infant baptism was condemned in the same sentence with that concerning the sacrament. It had been the common artifice of

* "Einen zweyfachen papisten und Vetter des Antichrists." Marhein., tom. ii. p. 145. This author expressly asserts, that these and other similar expressions preceded Luther's letter to the Strasburgers. Among other works of Carlstadt to be found in the Oxford collection are—(1) "Auslegung dieser Wort Christi Luc. 22. Wider die einfeltige und zweifeltige papisten, welche solche wort zu einem abbruch des Kreuzes Christi brauchen." (2) "Wider die alte und neue papistische messen"—both in 1524.

the Roman churchmen, in every age, to impute to their heretics, along with their real opinions, some monstrous errors, which the others disavowed; and even thus it was with Luther. No sooner was he become the head of the Saxon church, than he showed no greater truth in his method of arguing with those who dissented from him.

I shall abstain from any speculation on his motives. But there is one passage in this letter, commonly advanced as a proof of the sincerity of his sacramental opinion, which is, on other accounts, deserving of notice. "I am neither able nor willing to deny, that if Carlstadt, or any one else, had been able to persuade me five years ago that there is nothing in the sacrament except bread and wine, he would have rendered me an important service. I have laboured with the greatest possible anxiety in the investigation of this question; I have struggled with all the powers I possess to extricate and set myself free; for I could not help seeing how strong a hold this subject would give me against the papacy. I have besides had two correspondents who have written to me on this matter much more skilfully and acutely than Carlstadt, without being guilty of such a capricious distortion of words; but I find myself fast, and I can discover no means of escaping away. The text of the Gospel is too plain and strong; it cannot easily be broken down—least of all by expressions or glosses forged by that dizzy head. And even now, if any one could convince me, by plain scriptural proofs, of the truth of that opinion, I am sufficiently predisposed to embrace it, without its being forced upon me with so much bitterness. But the madness, with which Carlstadt rages on this subject, only makes me the more obstinate in the defence of my own opinion. Nay, if I had no opinion on the subject, the very futility of the arguments

excogitated by his whirling brain would lead me to reject his opinion as weak and frivolous, as I trust that I shall make clear to all of you, as soon as I shall have replied to them. In fact, I can scarcely believe him to be in earnest, so thoroughly must God have stupified and blinded him. . . .

“In respect to his image-breaking, I might let that tempest pass, seeing that I have broken more images with my writings, than he ever will break with all his storming and extravagance. But when he goes so far as to excite and urge men to that work, as indispensable to the name and liberty of a Christian, that is no longer endurable It is the work of Satan, that in this dangerous night he turns away our eyes from our true light, and leads us astray by his unsteady brands and torches. And I beseech you, evangelical Christians, my beloved masters and brothers, to turn away from Luther and Carlstadt, and turn towards Christ; not like Carlstadt, only towards the works of Christ—as if Christ were an example only, and therein not superior to the other Saints, but as He is the free gift of God, or, as Paul says (1 Cor. i. 30), He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—which spirit these prophets have neither felt, nor tasted, nor learnt, while they utter, with their quick lively voices, buffooneries about heaven and such like high-flown expressions, to which they attach no meaning themselves, and by which they mislead, distract and oppress the consciences of others, so that people stop to wonder at their mighty knowledge and forget Christ the while.”

I shall leave this passage to produce what effect it may upon impartial readers—only reminding them that, at the disputation at Leipzig, held but five years before, it was Carlstadt, not Luther, who stood prominent as the public defender of the doctrine of justification by faith in

opposition to any trust in works. And on that occasion, we may remember, he was not charged by Luther or any other reformer, with dulness, or dizziness, or fatuity, still less with any indifference to that great dogma.* This last and worst imputation was never breathed until after his breach with the Wittenbergers. But whatever may have been the feelings by which Luther was actuated, his object was sufficiently manifest. It was to overwhelm, by reason or by invective, by spiritual denunciations or by the general influence which his name gave him, both the doctrine and the credit of his antagonist.

In pursuance of this purpose he immediately published (in the beginning of January, 1525) a tract "Against the Celestial Prophets." In this important work, after describing in his own manner the circumstances which led to the banishment of Carlstadt, he proceeded to a more elaborate attack on his tenets. At the same time he praised the greater moderation of the changes introduced by himself. It had been made a serious charge against him that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, though he denied the sacrifices, he retained the word Mass, for which Carlstadt would have substituted Supper; and that he still permitted the elevation of the consecrated elements. He defended his regulations. He maintained too the doctrine of the real presence with his accustomed vehemence; and treated the opposite opinion with no greater respect, than he was wont to show to the "impieties" of his papal adversaries. Yet while he was arguing with all this heat, he was not blind to the im-

* It is in a letter to Spalatin, written on the 13th of the preceding September, that Luther appears first to have broached this charge: "Carlstadius traditus est tandem in reprobum sensum, ut desperem ejus reditum. *Semper alienus a gloria Christi fuit, eritque forte in perpetuum.* Infensior mihi est, quam ulli hactenus fuerunt inimici. Deus misereatur ejus peccati quo peccat ad mortem!" (No. 619.)

mediate consequences of the division which he thus inflamed. He perceived the advantage that it would give to the common enemy—but in comparison with the opinion, which he took for truth, he disregarded it. “I know,” he said, “that the pontificals are highly delighted with this dissension and are prophesying our destruction from it. Let them boast as they will! If my work is of God, no one will destroy it; if not of God, neither I nor any one else will perfect it.” This undoubtedly was to take an unassailable position. This his favourite dilemma was indeed conclusive against every suggestion of human prudence; yet its security had not prevented him, on many former occasions, from turning to the service of God the common sense and policy, by which the affairs of this world, under God’s Providence, are conducted. Nor was there any reason then, why he should imitate the injudicious zeal of his rival, and cast away that shield of charitable forbearance, which is often the surest wisdom, as well as the brightest grace, of a Christian philanthropist.

However, there were others, of juster views or calmer temperament, who were desirous to crush this controversy in its origin. The theologians of Strasburg were distinguished in this endeavour. They despatched their Hebrew professor, Gregory Chaselius, on a pacific commission to Wittenberg. He was instructed to impress upon Luther the necessity of a fraternal union on the question of the sacrament, and to suggest that this might be effected by the use of general terms, which should express the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but not pretend to define the manner of his presence. And such, under similar circumstances, has generally been the counsel of those, who loved the harmony and happiness of their brother Christians better than they loved their own opinion.

But Luther would listen to no such proposal. "I too am for peace," he replied, "but with no sacrifice of truth.* The question concerning the presence must by all means be examined; it is not possible to do otherwise; it is of so much moment that the one party or the other must be the servants of Satan; there is no room here for middle counsels." Such was the substance of his reply, and it at once exhibited the obstinacy of his own resolution; and cut off, as it unhappily proved, any prospect of concord among the reformed churches. For whether it were, that he was so certain of the truth of his own opinion as to feel assured of its immediate triumph, or so confident in his talents and authority as to count upon an easy victory by those means, in either case he had ill-considered the character of his opponents. For they were neither less deeply devoted to their doctrine than he to his, nor less firm and fearless and learned and ingenious in its defence. For it was no longer with the exile of Orlamund that he had now to deal. The divines of Switzerland had taken up the controversy with all their force; and we shall presently examine in what sort of spirit they conducted it.

Meanwhile the unfortunate Carlstadt, insulted by the one party, and not entirely trusted by the other, became anxious to be reconciled with Luther, and to return in peace to Saxony. After five months of exile he wrote to Spalatin to request his intercession with the Elector. Luther to a certain extent supported this petition, though he professed little hope of coming to any lasting terms with so insolent an antagonist. Frederick rejected it. He even refused a safe-conduct, which Carlstadt sought on the pretence of a conference with Luther, and recommended that such conference, if it were necessary, should

* "*Se quidem pacem cupere, sed salva veritate*"—i. e. on his own terms.

take place out of his dominions. Carlstadt, after wandering through various parts of Upper Germany, fixed his residence for a time at Rotenburg and continued to rouse the people against the pictures and images; but there is certainly no sufficient proof that he had any share in the seditious tumults* by which Germany was then desolated. Yet, in the universal confusion, the distinction between the spiritual and the civil insurgent was not drawn; the general invectives and particular insinuations of Luther had their effect; and when the rebels were at length overthrown and chastised, Carlstadt was in very great danger of being involved in their fate. He was pursued; but some friends lowered him out of the walls of the town in a basket, and thus saved him.

He then became more and more importunate for the recal of the sentence of exile. He supplicated the Elector—he supplicated Luther. He wrote a tract to prove his entire innocence of any share in the insurrection, and applied to the latter to assist him in publishing it. Luther was moved by this appeal to his generosity. Common justice and Christian charity alike urged him to yield to it. The tract was published, and the defence of Carlstadt prefaced and circulated by the hand of his enemy.† But it must be mentioned that this defence was accompanied by another communication relating to their doctrinal difference; and in this Carlstadt was not ashamed to declare, that whatever he had hitherto propounded on the subject of the Eucharist was in the form

* They will be mentioned in chapter xxii.

† “Entschuldigung D. A. Carlstadts des falschen namens des aufruhr, so ihm ist mit unrecht aufgelegt. Mit einer vorred D. M. Luthers.”—Autog. Reform., A.D. 1525. Along with these, as well as separately, is found the “Erklerung wie Karlstadt sein lehr von dem hochwürdigen sacrament und andere achtet und geachtet haben will.”

of disputation only, not in assertion of a deliberate conviction. Luther accepted this apology. He renewed (on September 12, 1525) his instances with the Elector (John) to procure the recal of Carlstadt; and to that end he pressed, among other arguments, that, in Melancthon's opinion as well as his own, it would be better for the cause of the Reformation to relegate this turbulent spirit to some obscure village in Saxony, than to send him forth as a preacher and propagator of mischief in every part of Germany. By earnest and constant prayers, and in opposition to the opinion of the whole court, he at length succeeded. In the autumn of 1525 Carlstadt returned; but his first act, and be it carefully noted, was this—to make a public recantation of his sacramental errors, and to transmit to the Elector his assent to the formula of doctrine prescribed to him by the faithful and celebrated divines of Wittenberg.

The conduct of the parties in this dispute has of course been variously estimated by historians, and generally, as it seems to me, in a light too favourable to Luther. On his representation, and, however he may have disclaimed the act, in agreement with his principles, Carlstadt was exiled for a breach of spiritual, not civil, subordination; for there was no charge of sedition, unless the insults offered to Luther were so accounted, against the rustics of Orlamund. During his exile he was pursued somewhat vindictively, and some very dangerous charges were alleged against him, and not with perfect truth, by his powerful enemy. If his defence was published by Luther, yet it was associated with an act of humiliation; and when he was at length restored to the communion of the Saxon church, it was on that very condition, which Luther had so often and so insultingly rejected when proposed by the papists to himself—the condition of his retractation. Carlstadt was indiscreet and meddling,

and he may have been vain ; and it was doubtless a great offence that he carried both his practical and his doctrinal changes farther than his chief. For Luther was now transformed from a humble proscribed heretic into the head of an ecclesiastical party ; and so he began to lay aside the principles suited to his adversity and to return towards those which essentially belonged to the dominant establishment.*

* Scultetus (ann. 1528) quotes a querulous letter from Carlstadt to Swenckfeld, dated Kemberg, May 17, 1528, from which it appears that the writer was still engaged in a private controversy with Luther on the old subject, and that he was under some apprehension of a second exile, or some severer persecution : “ Ut mihi videtur, Lutherus iterum me expellet, aut conabitur gravius malum inferre. Omnia vendo, lectulos, tunicas, cantaros, et quicquid est suppellectilis. Id sciunt, sed nullus miseretur ; fortassis vellent etiam me et liberos meos inedia extinguere . . . ” He soon afterwards retired to Switzerland, not however on the compulsion of Luther, and remained there till his death, on December 24, 1543.

CHAPTER XXI.

PROCEEDINGS OF LUTHER.—DEATH OF FREDERICK.

Proposed synod for the establishment of the reformed church—rejected by Luther—for what reasons—his principles as to ceremonies, &c.—his exertions for the improvement of the university of Wittenberg—two proposals to the Elector—remarks—his projects for raising the condition of the parochial clergy—his general zeal for the advancement of the education of the poor—his address to the magistrates and cities of Germany—quotations—other works—his preface to Pomeranus's Commentary on the Psalms—Cochlæus (note)—his apology to Henry VIII.—false and fulsome, yet not extending to retraction of doctrine—rejected with contempt—a similar attempt to conciliate George of Saxony received with still greater scorn—death of Frederick of Saxony—his character—the gradual change in his religious principles—nature of his policy in regard to the Reformation—perhaps as favourable as it could have been—at least he gained time—his funeral sermons and oration—epitaph—remarks—Luther marries a nun—circumstances—his letter to the Archbishop of Magdeburg recommending him to marry—published by the latter—Luther's excuse for the act—Melancthon's apology for it to Camerarius—six passages relating to it (note)—remarks on his occasional levities in conversation and correspondence—general progress of the Reformation—Dantzic—Albert of Prussia declares in favour of it and marries, with all his knights—brief of Clement VII. to the parliament of Paris.

OTHER difficulties arose at that period, and so many differences of more trifling importance began to threaten the unity of the reformers, that it was proposed by some to assemble a synod for the establishment of one uniform ecclesiastical system. Luther objected to this project. However boldly he had made his appeal under other circumstances to a general council, he now disco-

vered that the deliberations of such bodies were invariably frivolous and unsatisfactory. "I do not think it at all safe" (thus he wrote to Hausman on the 11th of November, 1524) "to call together a council of our party for the purpose of imposing an uniformity of ceremonies; the thing is of bad example, however good the intentions with which it may be attempted. All the councils of the church from the very beginning prove this. Even in the apostolical council, there was almost as much treating about works and traditions as about faith. In those of later times, there has been no mention of faith, but only perpetual disputes about opinions and questions, so that to me the very word council is as suspicious and hateful as the word freewill." At the same time he laid it down as his principle of church government, that in indifferent matters every church should be left at liberty either to imitate others or to legislate for itself.

His decision against the convoking of a synod was at that moment unquestionably prudent, and the sort of licence of self-regulation which he permitted to his churches would certainly be popular and was not perhaps ill suited to those infant communities. But when he spoke with so little hesitation about "indifferent matters," he either forgot the difficulty of drawing any distinction universally satisfactory between points indifferent and points essential; or he had not learnt, that the mind, when thoroughly heated by doctrinal discussion, will frequently attach the highest importance to trifles the most insignificant; that the confidence, which he felt in his own views of the Christian system, was just as strongly felt by others whose views were different; and that there is scarcely any point which may not be made the subject of serious dispute during periods of religious excitement.

Having thus laid down principles for the internal dis-

cipline of his churches, he applied himself, in the year following, to maintain and renovate the great nursery of his doctrine and his disciples, the university of Wittemberg. In a letter addressed (in 1525) to John Frederic, son of John of Saxony, he mentioned : That many, being promoted to the evangelical offices of teaching and preaching, had left the university, and that it was not easy during the prevailing confusion to supply their numbers ; that their neighbours were predicting its downfall, which without speedy assistance was indeed threatened ; yet how deplorable would be the ruin of that school whence the Gospel had been propagated to every quarter of the globe ! He then proceeded to pray that proper students might be sent to receive the education there provided for them, and that no attention might be paid to certain courtiers who spoke contemptuously of letters. “ For you, at least, are not ignorant that the world is not governed by force and arms alone, but that men of learning are no less required to restrain the people by preaching to them the word of God. Without the aid of such men political power would not long avail, and the kingdom of God itself would without question be taken away from us.”

This remonstrance having been well received by the Elector, Luther wrote again (in the September of the same year), to request him to send commissioners to Wittemberg for the double purpose—first, of regulating the lectures and salaries of the professors ; next, of prescribing a form of sacred rites. In respect to the first of these proposals, it was of course natural that the authority which founded the university should legislate for its preservation. But by the second, the control over ecclesiastical matters was at once conceded to the civil authority ; and by the spontaneous suggestion of Luther himself, the power of making laws for the church of Wittem-

berg was vested in the crown. The commission was granted, the system of lectures underwent some modification,* and certain changes in the service of the communion, which had been previously introduced by Luther, received the confirmation of the Elector.

These objects being thus accomplished, Luther, with some excuses for his importunity, immediately (October 31) addressed to the Elector two other petitions: That he would make provision for the necessities of the poorer country clergy, who were suffering alike from the ruin of the ancient establishments and from the ingratitude of the people; and that he would take measures to remedy various defects in the civil administration. These too were received in good part. Another commission was issued, for the purpose of examining the condition of the monastic revenues, and providing from those and from other sources for the more decent maintenance of the parochial clergy; and the matter terminated as Luther proposed.


The zeal of Luther for the advancement of literature was not confined to the schools of Wittenberg, or to the limits of his own personal influence. Besides the general interest which he unquestionably felt, in common with every generous mind, in the improvement of the intellectual and moral destinies of mankind, he saw, more clearly than any one,† how closely the cause of letters

* Frederick had established several foundations for masses in the church of All Saints and others, and he enforced their application to that purpose till the year 1523. When the mass was abolished he did not resume the revenues, but applied them to the maintenance of professors and students; and John his successor confirmed this.

† In a letter to James Straus of April 25, 1524, he wrote: "Take especial care to press upon those whom you can influence the great cause of education; for I see clearly that the greatest calamities are impending over the gospel, if the education of the young be neglected. That of all things is the most essential." (No. 596.)

was connected with his own. In the year 1524 he published an "Address to the Magistrates of all the Cities of Germany, that they should establish and maintain Christian Schools." It is a work of which, among all his productions, the philanthropic wisdom and practical piety is perhaps the least disputable. Its leading purpose was to bring about the application of some of those fixed revenues which now remained without an object, and of other numerous imposts which under various pious pretences had been levied upon the people, to the religious education of the poor; and in the course of it he appealed to the Christian feelings and national spirit of his compatriots with the most persuasive power and warmth.

"I do beseech you, my beloved masters and friends, for God's sake and for the sake of the indigent youth, that you will not lightly esteem this matter, as many do—for it is indeed an earnest and important work, a duty to Christ and to the whole world, to give aid and instruction to the young. Since we thus aid and instruct not them only, but ourselves and all others besides them. How is it, my dear friends, that we must contribute such sums year by year, for arms, roads, by-roads, dams and such-like things innumerable, for the temporal peace and convenience of our city, and shall we not rather contribute to provide one or two intelligent instructors for the children of the poor and indigent? Let every individual citizen bring this consideration to his mind: hitherto he must have wasted abundance of gold and goods for indulgences, masses, vigils, foundations, wills, anniversaries, mendicants, brotherhoods, pilgrimages and all the rest of it; and henceforwards, through the grace of God, he is set free from all this giving and robbing: surely then, out of mere thankfulness and honour to God, he will bestow some part of this on schools for the



education of the children of the poor. The Almighty has indeed visited us Germans with His especial grace. We have among us an abundant supply of enlightened and talented young men, informed in languages and all science, who may be usefully employed in the instruction of the young. And our system too is so much improved, that more may now be learnt in three years, than was hitherto to be found in all the schools and all the cloisters. . . . It is then my earnest advice, prayer and supplication that you will either abolish those nurseries of dulness and wickedness, or convert them into Christian schools. And since we are thus providentially provided with the means of instruction, let us not reject what God's grace hath placed in our very hands. . . . Beloved countrymen, buy while the market is at your doors; gather in the harvest while it is bright and fine weather; use the grace and word of God while it is before you. . .

“Wherefore I entreat you” (thus, after much powerful argument and exhortation, he concluded) “turn this, my faithfulness and diligence towards you, to your own profit. And if there be any who shall look down upon me as one condemned and excommunicated, and so despise my counsels, let them observe only this, that I am seeking herein, not my own advantage or welfare, but that of the whole German nation. And though I were a fool, and counselled what was good, yet would there be no shame in following me. And though I were a Turk or a heathen, and it were clear that my advice tended, not to my own profit, but to that of Christendom, yet would you not do well to reject my service. A fool hath sometimes better counselled than a whole cabinet of the wise. And herewith I commend you all to God's grace, that he will soften and kindle your hearts, to the end that you may earnestly take charge of the poor, miserable, abandoned youth, and with God's help in-

struct and aid them towards holiness and the Christian regulation of the German people, in body and soul, with all fulness and overflowing, for the praise and honour of God the Father, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”*

Luther published some sermons at this time and wrote several epistles, which, though they doubtless had their influence at the moment, possess no great historical importance. A more elaborate and valuable work was his “Prelections on Deuteronomy;” in which however he did not forget to intersperse his pure theological disquisitions with some severe invectives both against the papists and the fanatics.† His friend and disciple Bugenhagen, more commonly called Pomeranus, superintendent of the church at Wittemberg, had composed a Commentary on the Psalms of considerable merit. Luther gave every facility to its publication. The more his conduct may have been blamed and his motives suspected in the affair with Carlstadt, the more is it necessary to do justice to his disinterested bearing towards his other fellow-labourers. On this occasion he prefixed a Preface to the Commentary of Pomeranus, in which he expressed his joy that the Gospel had at length acquired so many able advocates and expositors.

“I once began,” he said, “to employ myself on this work, but the tyranny of the papists obliged me to hang up my harp on the willows of that Babylon. But Christ has gloriously avenged my fortune. For now in the place of me alone, instead of the mere drops with which I was wearing him away, Satan is obliged to endure

* Marheinecke, tom. ii. ch. iii. p. 86—106.

† It should be observed that, in declaiming against the image-breakers, he expressed no affection for the images: “*Quanquam et ego imagines non admodum amem et vellem in templo non statui; alias levi pictura imagines in domo privata non possum damnare.*” Luth. Op. t. iii. p. 99 (ap. Beaus. iii. p. 256).

storms of rain and thunder and cataracts ; and thus has it come to pass that I should be lessened and they increased. Therefore, good reader, you must no longer expect my psaltery, but rather rejoice and congratulate and give thanks to Christ our Saviour, who in the place of the single poor and slender Luther has presented the sacred writers to your eyes, ears and touch, not through the pen and voice of one, but through the excellence of many." This was written in 1524, and on March 23 of the same year he recommended Melancthon to the Elector for the theological lectureship in still warmer expressions, not hesitating to ascribe to his friend, through the gift of God, even richer graces for the interpretation of Scripture than those which had been vouchsafed to himself. These instances however are sometimes brought to prove too much. They show that he could be generous—perhaps it was no more than just—to a faithful colleague or disciple, to one who pursued the same ends with himself by exactly the same means and under his own guidance. But they do not show that he might not be unjust and overbearing towards a rival or a rebel. The same energy of character which begets the virtue will sometimes admit the vice ; and those, who reward obsequious co-operation with the warmest gratitude, are most apt to resent the honest opposition of an independent mind.

During this period Luther exhibited two or three unusual symptoms of a pacific disposition. An Apology which he published for a young nun, lately escaped from her convent, drew down upon him the taunts and sarcasms of Cochläus and other papal adversaries. He took not any notice of them, nor allowed his more serious occupations to be thus interrupted.* So far indeed was

* In the year 1525 Cochläus again attacked him in a tract in which five hundred errors were imputed to him. I am not aware that this

he from offering any fresh insults to his original enemies—for the controversy with Carlstadt was an intestine dissension—that he made some awkward endeavours to atone for those already offered. He selected two names from the long list of his antagonists as the objects of his gratuitous contrition; both of them were princes, and the first was Henry of England—whether it was that he thought it politic at that moment of seditious anarchy to make a public demonstration of his respect for the highest authorities, or whether he was moved to those loyal submissions, as is generally asserted, by the pressing instances of Christiern King of Denmark, or whether he was really persuaded that a few hypocritical professions of reverence and humiliation would win over to his cause the most tyrannical and merciless and unprincipled and unchristian of all mankind.

However that may be, he now* found as strong expressions for his remorse as had before been suggested by his wrath. He deplored in the most abject tone the offence

was answered. Luther always despised this antagonist; and a reply which he discharged against him in 1523 was opened by an amusing parody. It was entitled "*Adversus armatum Virum Cokleum*," and it began—

"Arma virumque cano Mogani qui primus at oris
Leucoream fato stolidus Saxonaque venit
Littora. Multum ille et furiis vexatus et cestro
Vi scelerum, memorem rasorum cladis ob iram,
Multa quoque et Satana passus, quo perderet urbem
Inferretque malum studiis, genus unde malorum
Errorumque patres atque alti gloria Papæ."

Cochlæus was a native of Nuremberg. He became dean of Francfort and was appointed successively to canonries in the cathedrals of Mayence (Moganum), Meissen, and Breslau. In 1549 he published the "*Acts and Writings of M. Luther*," and continued in unwearied contention to the end of his life, in 1552.

* September 1, 1525. Henry asserts that he did not receive it till February, 1527, when his reply is dated.

which he had given by his folly and precipitation; and he supplicated, unworthy as he was, that he might still be admitted to partake of that distinguished clemency, of which he was daily hearing new commendations. And in this hope he affected to be the more sanguine, since many believed that his Majesty was not after all the author of the book which circulated under his name.* He then declared his willingness to give the utmost publicity to this acknowledgment of his crime.

Such submissions were sufficiently degrading; but it must be distinctly understood that they were merely of a personal nature. They extended to no offence beyond polemical violence and irreverence for the majesty of the monarch and the virtues of the man; they did not compromise any religious opinion or any evangelical principle. The doctrine of justification by faith was set forth in all its strength as the foundation of the whole fabric of the Reformation; the papists were assailed with the accustomed invectives; and Wolsey himself was stigmatised as a pest to the kingdom.

Yet was the effect of this attempt at conciliation pre-

* "Ut qui mihi conscius maxime sim, gravissime offensam esse tuam Majestatem libello meo quem (non meo genio sed incitantibus iis qui Majestati tuæ parum favebant) stultus et præceps edidi. Tamen spem et ausum mihi facit non modo regia illa tua clementia, sic mihi literis et verbis indies cantata a quam plurimis . . . verum etiam . . . libellum sub Maj. Tuæ nomine in me editum non esse Regis Angliæ. . . ." (No. 735). In respect to the authorship of the work he had long before expressed the same suspicion, and in fact insinuated by a pun that Lee had composed it. On July 4, 1522, he thus wrote to Spalatin (No. 412):—"Cogor virulentissimo *Leoni*, qui sese in Angliæ Regem transformavit, respondere. Ignorantia quidem rege digna est in eo libro, sed virulentia et mendacitas nullius nisi Lei est. Quam furit Satan! Sed ego quoque eum irritabo de die in diem magis. The ignorance displayed in that book is worthy of a king; but the virulence and mendacity belong to Lee alone."

cisely that, which Luther himself in his bolder moments would have predicted. Henry contemptuously* rejected the overture; and to the multitude of imputations formerly heaped upon the heretic, and lately exaggerated by that of incest, he now added, and with a better semblance, that of levity and inconsistency. The papal writers everywhere exulted. They described his candour as a proof of his self-condemnation. They misrepresented his confession of one fault as the recantation of all his doctrines and all his principles. They pretended to despise him whom they had feared; and they vilified him more because they feared him less. With the high churchmen on one side and the sacramentaries on the other, Luther was now beginning to take the position and adopt the policy of a middle party, and he committed the error so common to reformers in that situation. Placed between the avowed and disciplined adherents of the ancient system and the more violent section of the innovators, he endeavoured to conciliate the implacable foe, and vented his wrath upon the intemperate friend. The violence, which only irritated the latter, might have intimidated a papal antagonist; and the soft expressions, which he wasted on the most insolent of all his adversaries, might have softened the excessive zeal of an independent ally.

* Luther to Wenc. Link, December, 1525 (No. 761):—"Anglorum Rex respondet mihi tam hostiliter, ut videatur gaudere vindictæ occasione, sicut et Dux Georgius. Tam impotens et muliebris est istis tyrannis animus ac plane sordidus, &c." Henry certainly was not mild: "Quod ais Libri te tui pudere, nescio quam tu istud vere dicas; hoc unum scio, satis esse causæ cur debeat non illius modo libri pudere te, sed tuorum ferme omnium; quippe qui nihil pœne complectantur aliud quam errores turpissimos et insanissimas hæreses. . . . Utinam, Luthere, hæc tua verba tam vera forent quam falsa esse cognosco, &c." The tract abounds with such civilities.

He presently perceived his error and repented of his repentance. And in his second contrition he not only explained the nature and limits of his apology, but proclaimed his hearty regret that he had offered it at all. He had always found, he said, in all his dealings with the papists, whether with Henry, or George of Saxony, or Erasmus, or Gaetan, or the princes assembled at Worms, that excuses and moderation were injurious to his cause; that it was vain to seek for piety in the courts or hearts of princes; that his only solid confidence was in the divinity of his doctrine, and that thus at length it must be triumphant. These and similar assertions he interspersed with some samples of that bold invective which he now found on long experience to serve his purpose best.*

In the same conciliatory spirit and mistaken policy, he made, about three months after his letter to Henry, a similar attempt to appease the fury of George of Saxony, and with precisely the same result. He confessed the asperity with which he had treated him. He came with tears and laid his very heart before the feet of his highness, and humbly deprecated his further hostility. He expressed his deep concern to see a prince of such excellent endowments standing in opposition to the rock of Christ Jesus. In respect to any improper language at any time employed by him, he cast himself entirely on his clemency, and declared his readiness to make every concession, except that of his doctrine. At the same time he persisted in asserting the truth and eternity of that doctrine, and offered up his most ardent supplications that the prince might at length be softened and

* "Schreibe ich scharff und hart, so nympt man ursachen mein lehre zu verdammen mit solcher farbe und schein: Ich sey stoltz, hoffertig, beyssig, ungeduldig. Widerum, demüthige ich mich, so haben sie aber ursachen und sagen: Ich fliehe, ich fürchte mich, ich beucle, &c."

converted. But otherwise—should he persevere in his present violence—Luther held out to him, as a menace of the most awful consequence, that he should be compelled to direct his prayers against him; and such, he said, was his unbounded confidence in God's promises, that he had not any doubt of an immediate and effectual answer to his entreaties; since prayer was the impregnable citadel of refuge whither he betook himself invariably, whenever he was pressed by the crafty devices of Satan.*

The Duke's reply was no less insulting than that of Henry. And in his indignant spurning both at the amicable advances and the concluding threat of Luther, he cast upon him, as it were in a single mass, the various terms of abuse so profusely scattered throughout the invectives of the papists. And then, that a practical confirmation of his reply might not be wanting, he proceeded in his persecution of the reformers, occasionally carrying his vengeance beyond the ordinary punishments of exile and perpetual imprisonment, even to that of death.

In the midst of the manifold troubles, which from without and from within were disturbing the progress if not endangering the success of the Reformation, it was deprived of its first and faithful patron, Frederick of Saxony. He died on the 5th of May, 1525, in the sixty-third year of his age, after an illness of some duration, which probably impaired the energy of his declining years, and increased the natural cautiousness of his temper. As he fell on turbulent times, and as his policy was, in appearance at least, somewhat vacillating, his character was not correctly estimated at the moment, nor is it very easy entirely to unravel it now. Yet it had many points which are fixed beyond dispute. He was prudent, just,

* Sleidan, lib. vi. f. 85. A.D. 1525.

benevolent.* Though well skilled in military exercises and instructed in the practice of arms in the camp of Maximilian, he preferred the more glorious duties of peace, and wisely sought the interests of the throne in the happiness of the people. Hence his zeal for their education, displayed, not only in the foundation of the university of Wittemberg, but in the paternal care and affection with which he perpetually sustained it. His moral character had only one stain ; through a connexion with a person of low rank he had two illegitimate sons. But he consulted decency by endeavouring to conceal the scandal ; he did not allow his children to be a burden to the public ; and he was never married.

In respect to his religious principles, he appears to have persisted in his attachment to saints and relics and such-like objects, as late as the year 1520. Three years earlier he made a will, in which he exhibited much of the description of piety inculcated by the Roman church. Herein he bequeathed a sum expressly for vigils and masses for his soul. Besides other legacies for holy purposes, he provided that in fifty monasteries supplications should be offered in his behalf for four following weeks ; that his name should be inscribed in the register of their benefactors, and mention made of him

* One of the latest sayings ascribed to him seems to indicate the bitterness of disappointment which may be felt by a philosophical philanthropist, when he becomes at length convinced of the natural corruption and ingratitude of his fellow-creatures : " Whenever it is God's pleasure I will die with willingness, since there is neither love, nor truth, nor faith, nor any sort of good remaining any longer upon earth." Spalatin, who wrote an account of his last sickness and death, relates that shortly before his end he addressed his friends as follows : " My dear children, I beseech you, by God's will, that, if I have at any time given any offence to any one of you, by word or deed, he will forgive me, and also entreat all others to forgive me in like manner ; since we princes are ever inflicting some hardship or wrong upon the poor." Ap. Marhein., tom. ii. p. 133.

in their prayers. But in his last will, made very shortly before his death, there was no allusion to any such matters. In their place was an earnest entreaty to God that, through the merits of Christ Jesus, He would forgive him his trespasses. He made his confession, as was the practice, and received the sacrament in both kinds with the most affecting expressions of devotion.* He likewise sent for Luther, but the latter being absent in the disturbed provinces did not arrive till after his death.

There can be no doubt that Frederick was animated throughout his life by a religious spirit, and his actions influenced by what he took for piety. He was sincere in his support of the ancient system, so long as its sanctity remained unquestioned, but it was not the sincerity of bigotry. His understanding was too enlightened, his temper too moderate, his feelings too philanthropic, ever to betray him into that vice. He loved religion: in the first instance he embraced it, as was natural, in the form which was presented to him; and when late in life his candid mind received purer instruction, he turned to what he honestly believed to be the truth: and thus we cannot question that the same sort of feeling or principle (and it was feeling perhaps even more than principle) which at one time filled his churches with relics, at another bound him closely to the cause of the gospel. And, if he showed less enthusiasm for his adopted than for his ancient faith, this may even be a reason the more for believing his sincerity; since the zeal, with which

* On May 23, 1525, Luther thus wrote to John Rühel on this subject:—"He died a christian and holy death. The signs of his death (*das Zeichen seines todes*) were a rainbow which Philip and I saw in the night during last winter over the Lochau, and a child lately born at Wittemberg without a head, and another with deformed feet."!—(No. 705).

great conversions are so commonly set off and embellished, is sometimes nothing more than the cloak, by which the interested hypocrite endeavours to deceive both others and himself.

For there can be little question that, during the last four or five years of his life, the religious motive, which always operated in Frederick, was operating in favour of Luther. It was not, perhaps, that he was very deeply impressed by his theological principles. The doctrine of justification by faith, which with the divine was the corner stone of the whole edifice, was not of the same essential importance in the eyes of the prince; yet was the latter, in his own sense, a good evangelical Christian. His notions of a reformation extended beyond mere externals; he wished to purify the religion as well as the church—to re-establish the gospel in the place of the code of the Vatican; and if at one moment of great perplexity he snatched at the delusive suggestion, that the spiritual end at which he aimed might be as well accomplished by the hands of a self-reforming hierarchy, he presently abandoned that hope; and, as the affair proceeded, he became more and more convinced, that the only rational prospect of the revival of Christianity was to be found in the success of Luther. Meanwhile he was himself, if we are to credit Scultetus,* in the eyes of many the substantial support of the cause; as was proved by an impression generally prevalent, “that at his death the doctrine of Luther would perish likewise.”

The protection which he extended to Luther during his earliest perils probably proceeded from his sense of justice,

* “*Moriente Frederico morituram quoque doctrinam Lutheri.*”—Ann. 1525, p. 330.

for he must have perceived at once that Luther had some right on his side, and therefore some claim on the protection of his sovereign; but though his motives may afterwards have changed, his policy can scarcely be said to have undergone any alteration. It was regulated throughout by the same calculating caution—it was a policy of perpetual disavowal and perpetual connivance. While he permitted everything, he determined to be responsible for nothing. Resolved perhaps (for this is not quite clear) not under any circumstances to sacrifice the Reformer, he yet so trimmed his actions as to present a decent show to the powerful friends of Rome. Thus he tolerated much that he professed to disapprove, and he even left unpunished acts which he had positively prohibited. “I know the temper of the man,” said Luther in a letter to Hausman: “he will allow many things to be done by others, which he would not take upon himself either to advise or command.” Indeed so far did he carry the appearance of neutrality and entire disconnexion with the party, that he never admitted Luther to his presence; he never held any conversation with him; he had never been seen by him, except once only, when he was pleading the cause of mankind before the Diet of Worms.*

It is easy to justify a successful policy; and that of Frederick was doubtless well calculated to meet the various difficulties of his position. If his caution bordered on timidity, the courage of Luther frequently broke out into rashness. By an early profession of the yet obnoxious principles he might have drawn upon the

* “I have never,” as Luther wrote soon afterwards, “spoken a single word to the Elector, nor heard him speak, nor have ever seen his face, except once at Worms in the presence of the Emperor, when I underwent my second examination.”—*Marhein.*, tom. ii. p. 134.

cause the arms of all its enemies, before it had won any powerful adherents. Probably he believed too that its progress was the most sure, when least interrupted by external causes; that better principles will then most certainly prevail over worse, when they are left to operate with the least interference of authority on either side; that, in the conflict of truth with falsehood—of right with wrong—if only violence and powerful influence and every other form of compulsion can be prevented and the parties committed to a fair contention—Time, the great arbiter of our destinies, will never fail to award the victory to the former: and thus it may really be, that he was aiding the cause most effectually when he was refusing it every aid, except such secret negative protection, as was barely sufficient to preserve its infancy from violent destruction, and create for it space to strengthen after its own fashion, and to prepare its own weapons for the good fight that awaited it.

He was buried in the church of All Saints at Wittenberg. His funeral was conducted with little pomp and a total absence of superstitious observances, under the direction of Luther and Melancthon. Luther preached two sermons on the occasion, and rose above the temptation of flattering even a departed prince and friend. Melancthon pronounced the funeral oration in Latin, and composed the epitaph, which concludes with the following distich:—

“ Nulla tuas unquam virtutes nesciet ætas;
Non jus in laudes mors habet atra tuas.”

This likewise was true; yet, that it was so, is owing to that providential dispensation, which brought the subject of it into contact with a spirit incomparably greater than his own, and thus, without much agency on his part, made the last years of his reign the epoch of the most

important revolution in the history of Christianity. For had this been otherwise—had Frederick died only seven years earlier—he would have been consigned to the same obscurity with the nameless line of his ancestors; and the monument, the silent memorial of his peaceful virtues, would probably have recorded, as the most glorious result of his piety, that he had enriched and consecrated by thousands and ten thousands of holy relics the walls within which he reposed.

Just one month after he had thus celebrated the obsequies of his patron Luther married;* and, that the scandal which attended this act might be still greater, he married a nun. Her name was Catharine of Bora; she was of good family, and one of the nine recluses already mentioned as having escaped two years before from a convent in Misnia. She had passed this interval at Wittemberg, supported by such gratuitous means as could be provided, and, in spite of the calumnies of the papists,† in perfect respectability. It appears, from the

* Luther preached his sermons of May 9 and 10, and he married on June 13. "*Tertia decima mensis Junii inexpectato Boriam duxit Lutherus, nulli amicorum factum suum aperiens. Sed vesperi ad coenam vocavit olos Pomeranum, Lucam pictorem, jurisconsultum Apellum, et consueta sponsalia celebravit.*"—Melancthon to Camerarius.

† Even Erasmus must be accounted amongst these calumniators. At least Scultetus (ann. 1525, p. 278) publishes, from an inedited epistle addressed by him to Daniel Manchius, a friend of Campeggio, the following slander: "Lutherus, quod felix faustumque sit, deposito philosophi pallio, duxit uxorem, ex clara familia Bornæ," (so the name is written,) "puellam eleganti forma, natam annos viginti sex, sed indotatam et quæ pridem desierat esse vestalis. Atque ut scias auspicatas esse nuptias pauculis diebus post decantatum Hymenæum, nova nupta peperit." In the following March, however, in a letter to Franciscus Sylvius, he retracted the calumny: "De conjugio Lutheri certum est, de partu maturo sposæ vanus erat memor; nunc tamen gravida esse dicitur. Si vera est vulgi fabula, antichristum nasciturum ex monacho et monacha, quemadmodum isti jactitant, quot antichristorum millia jam olim habet mundus!"

relation of Amsdorf, that Luther had designed to unite her to one of his friends, a humble evangelical pastor; but that she had rejected this arrangement, remarking, with great simplicity, that had he proposed either to espouse her himself or to affiance her to Amsdorf, she should have felt less repugnance. Luther is represented to have been entirely overpowered by so flattering a declaration. He decided with his usual impetuosity; and, without any notice of his intention, he caused the ceremony to be immediately performed in the presence of only three friends, of whom Melancthon was not one.

This transaction afforded such fair ground for exultation to the papal party; and, what was more important, it was regarded with so much serious mortification by the Reformers, that it has acquired more historical importance than would seem justly to belong to it. I shall therefore briefly relate some of the attendant circumstances from which it seems to derive its proper character. It must first be mentioned that seven months before (November 9, 1524) Luther had formally abandoned the monastic profession, with all its obligations and appendages, and assumed the dress and title of doctor. He took this step, when he found his monastery entirely deserted, with every publicity, and after communicating his intention to the Elector; and the latter in reply presented him with the cloth necessary for his new habit. But there was then no serious suspicion of his intention to marry,* though Scurff is indeed related, on some


* On the 30th of the same November, in a letter written to Spalatin expressly to exhort him to marriage, Luther strongly disclaimed any such *present* intention: "I am in the hands of Providence, as a creature whose heart he can change and re-change, destroy and revive, at any hour or moment; but with the heart which I hitherto have had and now have it will never come to pass that I shall marry. Not that I am insensible

occasion, when speculating on that contingency, to have remarked, "If that monk should marry, he will undo all that he has done, and furnish abundant subject for ridicule both to the world and to the devil."

A few days before his marriage (on the 2nd of June) he wrote a very singular letter to Albert, Cardinal Archbishop of Magdeburg, which is generally connected with that event, and which at any rate is deserving of notice. This prelate had never thought proper by any act of violence to compromise himself with Luther: he even professed a general respect for his character and regard for his person. Luther on his part had treated him upon the whole with unusual moderation, and even entertained, as it might seem, some hopes of his conversion. At this time a report became current, that it was the design of the cardinal to secularise the property of his see in favour of himself and his own family, and according to the principles of the Reformation to marry. Luther heard this rumour, and was elated by the hope of gaining, from whatsoever motives, so illustrious a proselyte. He seized* his pen accordingly and addressed him to

to my flesh and sex, for I am neither a stock nor a stone; but because my mind is averse from wedlock, and my thoughts are rather turned on death and the punishment due to me as a heretic. I shall therefore neither fix limits to God's workings within me, nor will I strive in my heart against them; but my hope rather is that he will not permit me to live much longer."—Luther to Spalatin (No. 637). In another letter of the 16th of the following April (No. 693), partly on the same subject, he said: "I am as far as possible from any wish to marry; but take care that I don't yet get the start of some of you, as God is wont to bring to pass events the most unexpected."

* Luther displayed great eagerness in this business. He sent a confidential friend and relative named Rühel to conduct the negotiation with the archbishop, and made him the bearer of his letter. Rühel received it on June 3, and in case the prelate should urge in the course



the following effect:—That the hatred of the people was directed against the ecclesiastical rather than the secular princes, and that the former could scarcely hope to survive the storm; that by marrying and secularising one of his provinces he would recover the affection of his subjects; that he had a precedent for such proceeding in his own family—that of his cousin the grand master of Prussia, who had adopted the cause of the gospel with great advantage to his own affairs; that with all, who did not possess the gift of continence, marriage was become a religious duty essential to salvation.

We must here recollect, that these were not new principles invented on the occasion, for the sake of pandering to the passions of a powerful prince whom it was expedient by any means to win; but that they had been generally propounded by the Reformers some time before and without any view to the particular application of them. Doubtless Albert had encouraged the report and trifled with the credulity of Luther; there may even have been moments in which he meditated the double act of apostacy so warmly recommended to him; but he refrained from the commission of it. Yet willing to countenance an expectation, which he found perhaps to be agreeable to his people, and at the same time to show with what eloquence and authority the act from which he magnanimously refrained might be justified, he published the letter of Luther.

One reason, by which Luther himself, as well as his friends, attempted to justify his marriage, was the urgent importunity of his father; for he still lived, and was anxious, it seems, for the perpetuation of his race, or

of argument the propriety of example on the part of Luther as well as advice, he was instructed to reply that the latter was already prepared to set such example.

rather of that of his illustrious son. But when we recollect the contempt, with which he had treated the paternal instances twenty years before, when he took the most important step in his early life in direct opposition to them, we may question whether the actions of his mature age were directed by that influence, and whether, with his present imperious character and habits, even the persuasion of a father would have induced him to take any step, on which he was not previously determined. The truth is this: the inclinations which had been long working within him suddenly became predominant and irresistible;* and the principles, which he

* I shall cite three or four passages relating to this event. 1. The account of Amsdorf: "*Ecce autem, dum Lutherus de Catharina a Bora, virgine vestali, Doctori Glacio, pastori Orlamundico collocanda deliberat, venit Catharina ad Nicolaum Amsdorffium, conqueriturque se de consilio Lutheri D. Glacio contra voluntatem suam nuptiis locandam; scire se Lutherum familiarissime uti Amsdorffio; itaque rogare, ad quævis alia consilia Lutherum vocet. Vellet Lutherus, vellet Amsdorffius, se paratam cum alterutro honestum inire matrimonium; cum D. Glacio nullo modo. Hoc ubi Lutherus intellexit, audissetque ex D. Hieronymi Schurffii ore: 'Si monachus iste uxorem duceret, risuros mundum universum et diabolum ipsum, facturumque ipsum irritas actiones suas universas;' ut ægrè faceret mundo et diabolo, ut parenti etiam suadenti gratificaretur, Catharinam sibi uxorem ducendam censuit.*" 2. On the 15th of June Luther wrote to Rühel as follows: "Such being the madness of these rebels, I have taken measures that before my death I may be found by God in the state in which I was created, and cast off, as far as may be, every shred of my former papistical life. Let them rage then with still greater ferocity, and consider this as my valedictory act; for I have a presage that I shall presently be summoned away by God to his grace. Therefore at the instance of my father I have married." 3. About the same time, in a letter to Spalatin, he said: "I have silenced those who calumniated me and Catharine of Bora. If I am to give a feast in celebration of these nuptials you must not only be present yourself, but you must procure me a supply of venison. Meanwhile pray for us and give us your benediction. I have made myself so vile and contemptible, forsooth, by this marriage that all the angels, I trust, are

had maintained for more than three years, permitted—he may have thought that they commanded—the desired indulgence. This defence would have been sufficient for any man except Luther; but his position was so pre-eminent before that of all his brother Reformers, his achievements had been so splendid, his pretensions were so lofty, and, above all, his success had been so much advanced by the unquestionable disinterestedness of his designs and character, that his followers had a right to expect greater self-denial from him, than from a Spalatin or a Carlstadt. They had a right to expect, in return for the almost implicit obedience which they yielded him, that he would sacrifice any private inclination, how-

rejoicing and all the demons in tears. But those worldly-wise folks do not yet recognise the work of God, a pious and sacred work, and in my case only they deem it impious and diabolical.” 4. To Wenceslas Link he wrote: “Quite suddenly, and while I was thinking of anything rather than marriage, God wonderfully brought me into wedlock with the celebrated nun Catharine of Bora.” 5. The following was addressed to Amsdorf: “The report is true that I married Catharine, and that, in great haste, before the accustomed clamours of tumultuous tongues could reach me; for I hope that I shall yet live some short time, and I could not refuse this last act of obedience to the importunity of my father, that I might prolong his family and at the same time confirm my doctrine by my example—so many are there, even in the present light of the gospel, who are still pusillanimous. It has been the will and act of God; for I neither love nor burn, but feel an affection for my wife (*neque amo neque æstuo, sed diligo uxorem*). I shall therefore give a feast in celebration of my nuptials, at which my parents will be present; I wish you by all means to be of the party, and I therefore now invite and intreat you by no means to be absent.” 6. The following to Stifelius, on Michaelmas day of the same year: “If my marriage is the work of God, what wonder is it if the flesh is offended by it? for it is offended in the very flesh of the Deity and Creator, which he gave as a ransom and food for the salvation of the world: if the world were not offended in me I should be offended in the world, and should fear lest my act were not the act of God: but perceiving it to be offended and impatient, I am the more edified and consoled; and let such be your feeling.”

ever consistent with evangelical principles, rather than cast a certain, though it might be an unmerited, scandal upon the cause over which he presided. It was not merely the indecency of the moment which he chose for his nuptials, while the ashes of his prince and protector were scarcely cold and all Germany was reeking with the blood of her children—though this was at least an indiscretion, and was converted by the papists into a serious aggravation of his crime—but it was, that Luther, whose character had hitherto been free from any suspicion of sensuality, gave occasion, by this one imprudent act of self-indulgence, to those imputations of unholy motives, which were so freely, and sometimes so justly, thrown upon his followers. Thenceforward he ceased to stand apart from his brethren, and came nearer to the level of their common humanity.

Melancthon felt the wound ; and in a letter, which he immediately afterwards addressed to Camerarius, he sufficiently showed his opinion, that the act required defence, by his forwardness in defending it. After shortly describing the circumstances of the marriage, he continued : “Some perhaps will be surprised that, in this unfortunate moment, while good and honest men are everywhere in affliction, he should appear not only to be not oppressed with sorrow, but almost to disregard those evils which are before our very eyes ; especially since he will suffer in general estimation, at the very instant when Germany stands most in need of his dignity and magnanimity. And I account for this affair in this manner : he is by no means one of those who dislike society and intercourse with mankind. You know his habits of life, and can reflect better than I can describe them. Thus is it not surprising that his great and generous mind should have been in some measure softened, especially

since no sort of impropriety has been committed; for any vulgar reports which may be current on the subject are manifestly false and calumnious. I suppose too that nature compelled him to become a husband; and it is a humble and holy life, and declared honourable by Holy Scripture.* And in respect to what is said of the unseasonableness of the act, let us not be disturbed by that; for there may be something secret, something of the divine operation therein, which it would not be be- seeming to search too curiously; nor to heed the derisions and scoffings of those, who have neither piety towards God nor virtue towards man. But since I observe Luther himself to be somewhat melancholy, and disturbed through the change in his manner of life, I endeavour to console him with all assiduity and benevolence. Nor can I condemn this transaction as an error or falling away, though many of the ancient saints have both erred and fallen; because it is God's wish that, when we search his word, we should not regard the dignity or person of the man, but the word only; but least of all should we condemn the doctrine taught, through the infirmity of the teacher. Yet, as I have said, I do not admit that anything has been committed in this matter which is incapable of apology, or which ought indeed to be censured. . . .”

This was not a very confident defence; but the humiliation really was, that Luther, the master and idol of his friends, the contemptuous heaven-directed assailant of his enemies, should have committed any act of so dubious

* “Est vir iste nequaquam ex iis, qui homines oderunt et congressus fugiunt. . . . Itaque molitum fuisse quodammodo generosum et magnum animum ipsius non est mirandum. . . . Ego etiam naturam arbitror ipsum coegisse, ut fieret maritus. Estque vita ista humilis illa quidem, &c. . . .”
—Melancthon to Camerarius.

a character as to require any apology from any man. Yet, though this affair unquestionably lowered him in public estimation,* it inflicted no serious blow upon the cause. It came too late: the principles of the Reformation were too well established; the parties were too distinctly separated; the work was too deeply founded to be shaken through the infirmity of any individual, even though it were Luther who failed. Meanwhile he is believed to have increased his domestic comforts by his marriage; and it was worth some loss of public reputation and influence, if he purchased by the sacrifice twenty peaceful years of private happiness.†

Melancthon alludes in the above letter to the social habits and susceptible disposition of Luther. It is besides

* The papists continued the cry for some time. I find a tract of one John Hasenberg, published in 1528, and exhorting Luther even then to restore the nun to her lawful husband, Christ. "*M. J. Hasenbergii epistola M. Ludero et suæ parum legitimæ uxori Catharinæ a Bhor, Christiano prorsus animo scripta. In hoc, ut aut vel tandem cum prodigo filio respiscant . . . aut certe Luderus nonnam suo sponso Christo . . . reponat.*"

"*Omnibus in terris Ludero turpior alter
Non fuit, et non est, nec magis ullus erit.*"

It begins: "*Quosque tandem apostata omnium insanissime libidinosissimeque. . . . Verum tu, Ludere, homo apostata, hæretice, Picharde, superbe, scortator, livide, colerice, hominum deorumque spreter. . .*" Such are specimens not only of the "*Animus Christianus*" of the author, but of the language very commonly applied to Luther by the subalterns of the opposite party.

† The following expressions are strong; but he wrote them little more than a year after his marriage, and just after the birth of his first child (August 11, 1526):—"Ketha (Kitty), my rib, salutes you, and thanks you for having honoured her with so delightful a letter. She is extremely well and attentive to me, and in all respects obsequious and obliging to a degree that I had not ventured to hope, so that I would not exchange my poverty for all the riches of Croesus."—Luther to Michel Stifelius. (No. 816).

not disputed that in the familiarity of private intercourse he was sometimes betrayed into unguarded and even indecent expressions. It was the force of his imagination, the warmth of his temperament, the freedom of his bold and careless mind, which led to this laxity; and it was nourished by the rudeness of a monastic life and his inexperience in the manners of the more polished society even of that unpolished age. In his letters to his friends we find traces of the same irregularities which are imputed to his conversation; for of his letters many are indeed merely conversational, and no more than a faithful representation of what he would have said to the same friends, in moments of unrestrained conviviality. He sometimes wrote, as he sometimes talked, without consideration; but before he acted he commonly reflected, and when he reflected he was generally right. Thus, as we should always bear in mind, his moral character was entirely free from stain. And it is even in those very epistles, which do indeed betray the secret weaknesses of the man, and represent him without any exaggeration or disguise, as he was himself conscious when he remonstrated against their publication,* that we discover the strongest, because the most unsuspected, proofs of his excellence. It is even there, that we see the clearest marks of his genuine piety, of the upright and disinterested integrity of his intentions, of those natural good and grand qualities, which may be feigned indeed for a time and for a purpose, but which cannot be sustained through a long and various correspondence, unless they be true.

* In a letter to Capito of May 25, 1524, Luther, after complaining that a former letter had been published, thus proceeds:—"This circumstance almost deters me from writing letters at all, if they are to be thus hurried against my consent to the press; since among friends one both may and ought to express many things more freely, than it would be expedient to do before the public."—(No. 606.)

Of his public actions the very greatest might easily be ascribed, as they have been ascribed, to pride, or vanity, or ambition; but his letters betray no such secret. In his most intimate communications, "when he speaks without reserve, as if he were at the feet of his confessor," we find his predominant motives to have been the fear of God and the love of truth. That these were not always unalloyed, was the condition on which he wore his flesh, and walked with his brother sinners upon this corrupt earth.

The marriage of Luther may be fairly accounted as one of the many adverse events, which combined at this period to retard the progress of the Reformation; but it advanced notwithstanding. Among the imperial cities, those which had already embraced it became confirmed in their convictions, and, what was equally important, were acquiring the habits of ecclesiastical independence. In the infancy of a popular cause, founded upon newly-asserted principles, and struggling against an established despotism, every advantage retained is a position fortified—an additional point of support for further and bolder operations. It was a considerable gain to the reformers to have lost nothing. Under circumstances so adverse they could scarcely count on any fresh conquests, yet they made several and of great importance. The city of Dantzic declared in their favour.* The Counts of Oldenburg, of Hannau, and of Tecklemburg, announced their adhesion to the new principles. Further progress was made in Misnia and Lusatia; and the connexion between the Elector of Saxony and Philip Landgrave of Hesse was becoming every day more close and intimate.

But the greatest triumph was the establishment of the

* There is a letter from Luther extant (May 5, 1525), recommending a preacher Anzden Rathu, Danzig.—(No. 697.)

dukedom of Prussia, on the suggestion of Luther,* as an independent state, upon the ruins of the Teutonic order. This revolution was attended by the secularisation of the domains of the church. On the installation of Albert in the dignity of duke, the Bishop of Samland resigned into his hands all the temporal jurisdiction attached to his see, as at variance with the evangelical institution and purely spiritual character of the episcopal office. The gospel preachers, already introduced from Germany, were encouraged and multiplied; and that their instructions might reach even the lowest of the people, interpreters were appointed to translate their sermons into the Prussian dialect. The marriage of the duke speedily confirmed the declaration of his independence; and this example was followed, with the single exception of the Duke of Brunswick, by all the knights, his brethren, the sworn and consecrated champions of the Apostolical Church.

A brief was addressed by Clement VII. to the parliament of Paris on the 20th of May, 1525, which would prove, if proof were wanting, that the principles of the Reformation had already extended to France. The Pope observed, that he had been informed how impious heresies were beginning to spread in that country, and how prudently a commission had been appointed for their

* Luther thus wrote to John Brisman, a minister in Prussia, on July 4, 1524:—"When I first conversed with Prince Albert, master of the Teutonic order, and he consulted me about the rule of his order, I counselled him to despise that foolish and confused rule, and to marry (*suasi ut contempta illa stulta confusaque regula uxorem duceret*), and to reduce Prussia into a political form, whether principedom or dukedom. After me Melancthon gave him the same advice. He then smiled, but made no reply. Now I see that he has adopted this counsel, and I trust that he may bring it to a speedy accomplishment."—(No. 609). When it was accomplished, Luther addressed to Albert a letter of applause and congratulation.

chastisement. By his authority he confirmed that commission. He urged the necessity of an universal combination against the fury of Satan and his satellites, for the common preservation of all mankind; since this madness did not assail religion alone, but designed to confound and overthrow all thrones, nobles, laws and subordination. He promised that no exertions should be wanting on his part to heal the disease; and on theirs he trusted that such provisions would be made, as might rescue not only the truth and faith, but also the prosperity of their kingdom and the dignity of their order, from the domestic calamities everywhere disseminated by this pestiferous heresy, &c. &c.*

Such are the expressions invariably employed by the instruments of despotic power for the preservation of their tyranny, through fear of the opposite evil of anarchy. But in this case they received an apparent confirmation from the intestine commotions by which Germany was then desolated; and these were indeed well suited to stimulate the conservative spirit of a contiguous people, and to occasion the immediate suppression of principles which, however sound and popular, were found connected, even in their misinterpretation and abuse, with such grave and substantial calamities.

* Sleidan, *De Statu*, &c., lib. v. p. 83.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WAR OF THE PEASANTS.

Various causes for discontent, civil and ecclesiastical, among the German peasantry—and their extreme degradation—insurrections from 1491 to 1517—those of 1524 and 1525 originating in Swabia—the most violent were among the subjects of ecclesiastical princes—how far they were occasioned or coloured by the Lutheran principles—account of Thomas Munzer—his pretensions and doctrines—he formed a party, and established his sect in Muhlhausen—he placed himself at the head of the insurrection—his addresses to the peasants—cruelty, defeat, and execution—the principles on which the rebellions seem to have been founded—Luther gave early warning against the designs of Munzer—his epistle to Frederick and John of Saxony on that subject—his general exhortation to peace and subordination—the twelve demands of the Swabian rebels, and their address to Luther—his reply—written with considerable impartiality—he justifies slavery—Melancthon propounds the same sort of counsels and principles—Luther's personal attempts to repress the insurrection in Saxony—his philippic against the peasants—violent even to atrocity—his defence of that philippic even fiercer than the book itself—remarks—his spirit in this matter contrasted with the dying exhortations of Frederick of Saxony.

THE German people had been gradually reduced from the rude independence of their original institutions to a condition of unparalleled degradation and misery. First of all, through the progress of feudalism, the princes and great nobility grew in power and wealth at the expense of the lower classes; and they abused their superiority by the grossest sensual indulgences, by eager rapacity and even gratuitous oppression. Those evils were multiplied by the excessive aggrandisement of the hierarchy. There was no country in which the higher orders of the

prelacy had acquired such extensive territorial domains, with all the attendant prerogatives and authority, as in Germany. Several Sees were powerful principalities; and, according to universal testimony, the subjects of these were of all others the most deeply sunk in slavery and wretchedness—and this not only through the ordinary chance of greater extortion on the part of a tenant for life—not only through the fees, perhaps the purchase-money, due to Rome, and to be exacted by some expedient or other from the people—but also because those ecclesiastical governments were in their nature more arbitrary. In some of the secular principalities there was some semblance of free institutions, some relic, or at least some shadow, of ancestral privilege and independence; but in the spiritual principalities even this was not preserved, and being purely despotical they combined, as spiritual despotism is wont to do, the most cruel and searching modifications of tyranny.

But besides the pomps and luxuries of the prelacy, the whole swarm of inferior ecclesiastics was likewise to be supported; and in no other country were they more abundant or more rapacious. During the last two or three centuries their numbers had increased, and the idlest and most consuming portion of them was that which had increased the most. Monasteries produced others of the same order, and each fraternity propagated its own branches with poisonous fertility. New orders, again, were perpetually rising up in rivalry to the ancient and to each other; and the mendicants especially spread like locusts over the whole surface of the country, and became more and more devouring through long encouragement and impunity. Besides, as the church advanced in corruption, their facilities of extortion were multiplied even beyond the proportion of their numerical aggrandisement. Fresh devices were invented, the

ancient superstitions were perpetuated with more pernicious activity, and all were turned with augmented shamelessness to the one manifest purpose of pecuniary gain. So many were the implements of exaction, so numerous, so skilful, and so willing the hands that wielded them, so harassed by other grievances the people against whom they were directed, that the frequent insurrections, of which we read, amongst the German peasants occasion no surprise—the less so as the weight of their actual burdens was aggravated by the traditional records of their primitive independence.

Many such partial outbreaks disturbed the conclusion of the fifteenth and the beginning of the following century. One, of sufficient importance to acquire a distinctive appellation,* created much confusion in the low countries. In 1491 the subjects of the Abbot of Kempten revolted against him. In 1503 a combination of peasants, under the name of the *Bundschuh*, produced much disorder in the neighbourhood of Spire. In 1514 the rebellion of the peasants of Wirtemberg against Ulrich, their duke, assumed so formidable an appearance, that the mediation of the emperor and other princes, and the removal of certain obnoxious imposts were found necessary to appease it. In the year following two thousand insurgents were massacred in Carinthia. At the same time Hungary was the scene of a much more serious disturbance, which was only put down by a dreadful slaughter of the factious. These various movements in so many quarters—we overlook the successful revolution of the Swiss—occasioned by ancient grievances, and foretold by the wisest of the preceding generations, took place during a period of un-

* The rebels were called the *Käsebrodter*—cheese and bread men—from the emblems of hunger inscribed upon their banners.

usual ecclesiastical concord, and before the voice of Luther had been raised against any one of the abuses of the church.

The movements were for the most part repressed by force, which is but a temporary resource against the general dissatisfaction of a nation. They were local only, so that there existed multitudes of disaffected who had not yet made any trial of their strength. The causes remained; and while the authorities permitted them to flourish in their full exuberance, the people were becoming somewhat more enlightened, and therefore more sensible of the weight of their wrongs and the shame of enduring them. And even the memory of past reverses was effaced, when they beheld the independence and comparative prosperity of Switzerland, and thought on the means by which she had won them. On these accounts there can be little question that some general attempt at emancipation would have been made by the peasants of Germany about this time, even had Luther and Zwingli remained faithful sons and ministers of the apostolical church. But the circumstances and the moment were no doubt influenced by those great ecclesiastical disputes which then occupied universal attention, and excited in the cottage as deep a sensation—attended with at least as much religious sincerity—as in the courts of kings.

The first insurgents were the Swabians. They had the plea of peculiar oppression in some obnoxious imposts; and they may have been moved by their contiguity with the Swiss and the easier communication of free principles. They rose in the autumn of 1524. In the beginning of the following year the conflagration spread so rapidly, that few provinces in Upper Germany altogether escaped it. It is not my office to trace its progress, or to describe the measures by which it was extin-

guished. The former was disgraced by much barbarous outrage and depredation ; the latter by vindictive cruelty, sometimes aggravated by treachery. I willingly consign such painful topics to the diligence of the civil historian. Yet it should be observed, that the first and most violent insurrections broke out among the subjects of ecclesiastics ; and that the destruction and plunder of monasteries, the demolition of images, and other similar excesses were the earliest offences of the rebels. And as those spiritual nobles are believed to have given the greatest provocation to revolt, and as they were the first against whom the torrent of popular indignation was directed, so is it related that they were the fiercest in their conflicts and the most implacable in their vengeance.*

And hence arises the obvious remark, that these tumults were not directly occasioned by the writings of Luther. For the States in which they originated, and in which they raged most furiously, were those from which the doctrines of the reformer had been most diligently excluded. This proved the impolicy of the prohibition. Those who evaded it (for some of course contrived to do so) probably acquired very erroneous notions of the matters in dispute, through the difficulty of access to the compositions in which they were treated ; while the majority were kept in entire ignorance of the particular nature of those discussions, by which all Europe was agitated, and of which the general results could not possibly be concealed from them. And thus it came to pass

* On one occasion, in the month of May, a large body of insurgents surrendered on conditions to the forces of the Prince Palatine and the Archbishop of Treves, commanded in person by those two potentates. On some vain pretence of tumult the prisoners were massacred ; and it is particularly related that while the Prince Palatine was generously exerting himself to restrain the fury of the soldiers, the Archbishop was fomenting the crime.

that that very evil, which was most apprehended from the diffusion of the works of Luther, namely, civil insubordination, was only inflamed by the half successful attempt to suppress them. Ignorance of the principles of the Reformation was called, in the specious language of the malcontents, ignorance of the Gospel; it was not the arguments of man, but the word of God which had been closed against the people. This gave them an additional grievance, another and a stronger plea for rebellion—since it was a grievance in which their eternal interests were supposed to be concerned, and which was placed in their imagination as a crown upon all the rest—their oppressors forsooth had thought it little to rob and degrade them in this world, unless they could exclude them at the same time from the world to come.*

Under these peculiar circumstances, with so many real wrongs, so many temporal grounds for just complaint, while at the same time the seeds of religious discontent were loosely scattered among the insurgents, with no proper cultivation, it was easy to give a religious colouring to the whole course of their operations. Nothing was wanted but the voice of some popular fanatic to inflame the spirit of civil rebellion by a higher and still keener incentive; and that pernicious enthusiast was found in the person of Munzer.

Thomas Munzer was, in the first instance, the associate of Storck and Stubner, in the seditions chastised at Zwickau, and in the tenets (if such they can be called) afterwards denounced by Luther at Wittemberg; and though he was not there present at the overthrow of his

* “*Hujus anni vere primo, per Sueviam, atque vicinam Germaniæ partem, quæ est ad Danubium, altera est exorta tempestas ordinis plebei contra Proceres Ecclesiasticos; jamque jurejurando et fide data societatem coibant, obducta causa, quasi et evangelii doctrinam tueri et servitutem ab se profligare vellent. . . .*” Sleidan, lib. iv. p. 67.

comrades, he had been brought on other occasions within reach of the reformer, and had inspired him with indignation and contempt.* After being expelled from Prague, Jutterbock; and other places, he obtained the office of a preacher at Altädt in Thuringia, an imperial city, in the Electorate of Saxony; and there for some time propounded his opinions, under the immediate influence, as he declared, of the spirit of God. He was not destitute of literary attainments, and possessed besides a great command of scriptural texts and expressions—a sort of acquirement essential to a theological polemic and demagogue. In his harangues he attacked with almost equal vehemence the Pope and Luther—the former in the customary expressions of popular invective—and the latter as scarcely less criminal, through his indulgence to the infirmities of his brethren, and his ignorance of the genuine gifts of the spirit. Those among his own peculiar doctrines, which were not purely fanatical, savoured of mysticism. He preached that salvation was to be procured by the observance of the moral code, by the mortification of the flesh in clothing and fasting, by solemnity of countenance, by nourishing the beard and by silence. These and such like offices he called the cross of Christ and the discipline of a Christian. He was opposed to all ecclesiastical ceremonies. He exhorted his disciples to seek the Lord in frequent

* “ Alstadii quæstorem, cum apud me esset, monui ut Thomæ prophetæ spiritum ab se alienaret; si quid interim actum est ignoro. Ego plane spiritum istum, quisquis sit, non queo ferre. Laudat mea, ut Thomas ipse scribit, et tamen contemnit et alia majora quærit. Deinde sic absurdis et inusitatis et extra scripturam verbis et orationibus loquitur, ut phreneticum aut ebrium credas. Nos fugit et congregari non vult, et tamen sese mire jactat. Rogavi itaque quæstorem, ut urgeret hominem ad conferendam nobiscum suam doctrinam; nescio an efficiet. Noster spiritus talis non est, ut metuat conferri cum omnibus etiam malis et bonis spiritibus.” Luther to Spalatin, Aug. 3, 1523. (No. 517).

and solitary meditation, apart from human intercourse ; and on such occasions to inquire into the nature of God and the reality of his Providence towards man ; into the certainty of the atonement of Christ and of the truth of his religion. And if any doubts should arise—for he admitted the possibility of doubt—he directed them to appeal at once to God* and ask some sign of Him. Should this for the moment be withheld, they were to expostulate with their Maker, as men aggrieved and angry, and to persist still more fervently in the pious importunity of prayer. Doubtless this passionate perseverance would prove acceptable to God ; who, perceiving therein the zeal and ardour of their hearts, would at length vouchsafe a sign to his faithful followers, as to his saints in ancient days. In support of such injunctions, he taught the supernatural character of dreams, as the means employed by the Almighty for the manifestation of His will. And having once opened this illimitable field to the imagination of his followers, it was easy for him to find a sign for the removal of every doubt, a vision in answer to every supplication.

By this strange confusion of sound morality with attractive absurdities, heated by violent declamation against the doctrines and ministers of the church, Munzer presently formed a religious party ; and then he proceeded to his further purpose, which was to convert it into a political faction. To this end he wrote down the names of his adherents, and bound them by oath to co-

* “ Satan so advances those prophets of his, that there are now some few citizens of Nuremberg who deny Christ, who deny the word of God, who deny baptism and the sacrament of the altar, who deny the civil authorities. They acknowledge nothing but God, therefore they sit captive in prison—*solum confitentur esse Deum, ideo capti sedent in carcere.*” Luther to John Brisman, Feb. 4, 1525. (No. 671). If this were true, it represented the abuse of Munzer’s opinions.

operate faithfully together, for the subversion of the civil authorities. As soon as these designs were discovered, Frederick, who had tolerated his mere religious extravagance, at once expelled him from his states. He fled to the neighbouring town of Muhlhausen, where he had previously acquired some notoriety, and where his projects were attended with better success. By his influence with the people he removed his enemies from the government of the city, and acquired for himself the senatorial dignity. He caused the expulsion of the monks, and appropriated to his own use the largest and wealthiest among their establishments. And he then pronounced, as from immediate inspiration, his decisions upon all matters and causes, at his own arbitrary discretion, by the interpretation of dreams, or scriptural passages; and all that proceeded from his lips was deemed holy. In addition to this, he maintained the community of property, as a natural and universal law, vindicated by the dignity, the equality and the liberty of man. And this principle he likewise inculcated with so much effect, that all laborious works, as we are informed, did really cease, and the artisan and the peasant, suspending the implements of their skill, received their share of the abundance of the wealthy, under the authority of the law of Christ.

This continued for several months, during the conclusion of 1524 and the beginning of the following year. Meanwhile the rustics were in arms throughout the neighbouring provinces to the number of at least forty thousand; they had gained some advantages over the nobles, and had burnt or plundered many castles and citadels. Munzer, on the persuasion of one Pfeiffer, who was even a wilder fanatic than himself, seized this moment to place himself at the head of the insurrection. He began by an inflammatory address to the miners of Mansfeldt:—

“ How long, my beloved brethren, will you remain with your arms folded ? How long will you resist the will of God ? Are you faithful, and do you believe that the Lord has forsaken you ? How often have I represented to you your duty ! But God cannot now delay much longer. You must now take courage, or the sacrifice of your broken hearts will avail you nothing. Your miseries will be multiplied ; it is my authority which assures you of this. If you refuse to wear the crown of martyrdom, which God now offers you, you will presently be found wearing that of Satan. You will perish all of you if you despise the commands of God, which I, in His behalf, announce to you. Already France, Italy, Germany have taken up arms. Three hundred thousand peasants are in array in Klegau, in Hegau, and along the banks of the Neckar. My only fear is that they will fall into the net of peace that is laid for them ; for wherever it may happen that but three of you are assembled together, with a full confidence in God and no other object but His glory, you have no cause to fear a hundred thousand enemies. Let us then procure the peace which we desire, and which God hath promised us. But be not softened by the flatteries of Esau ; be not moved by the calamities of the impious, by their prayers, or by their tears. Show them no mercy. It is God’s will that you treat them as Moses treated the inhabitants of Canaan ; and that will He hath revealed unto me.”

Soon afterwards, on the 5th of May, when the insurgents were assembled at Frankenhause in the presence of the forces of John and George of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse and the Duke of Brunswick, those princes offered them pardon on condition that they would surrender Munzer and his accomplices. To avert that fate the fanatic collected his people around him, and with even more than his wonted severity of countenance ad-

dressed them : “ You see, my fellow-soldiers and brothers, that your tyrants are at hand ; yet, though they have conspired against your lives and mine, they have not the courage to attack us ; but they offer vain and absurd conditions, that they may deprive you of your arms. So manifest must it now become to you that this is not my enterprise ; it is not undertaken on my authority, but by the command of God. And thus it is the duty both of you and of me to obey, and not to desert the post in which the Lord hath placed us. When Abraham was obedient to the divine voice, God preserved to him his son, and rewarded his faith with many other benefits ; we therefore, who are now in the condition of Abraham, must persevere and commit the event to God. . . . Our enemies are called princes ; they ought to be called tyrants ; for they take no care of you : they exhaust all your means and then squander them away in wickedness. They pay no attention to the public good, they take no cognisance of the causes of the poor ; they neglect justice, they permit the practice of robbery and every other crime ; they have no regard for the orphan or the widow, they make no provision for the education of youth ; and as to the worship of God, they not only themselves neglect it, but prevent it in others. In short, they have but one single object before them, to convert the property of all their subjects to their own uses. . . . But even if all this were endurable, is it with impunity that they shall defend the accursed impiety of the ecclesiastics ? Who knows not how flagitious is their barter of masses, and all their other scandals ! . . . Let us then rather perish than consent to so much iniquity, and allow the gospel truth to be snatched away from us. I, on my part, can most confidently assure you that God will be with us, and the victory our own, for He hath himself, face to face, made me this promise ; himself, I say, He who can

neither deceive nor lie, hath commanded us to proceed against our governors, after this fashion. And as in ancient time He revealed his might for the protection of his saints, so can there be no possible doubt that He will also glorify this day by some miraculous interposition. Be not moved then by the decisions of your reason; let not the show and shadow of danger disturb you, but rush bravely forward upon your impious foes; be not terrified by their artillery, for as to the balls which they shall cast against us, I will receive them all in my own vest. But even now behold the propitiousness of God! Behold the sign and testimony of his perpetual benevolence towards us! Lift up your eyes, I pray you, and behold that heavenly bow! The same is painted on our banners, and by this representation which he displays to us from above, God clearly signifies that He will be with us in the battle. By this very symbol He denounces overthrow and destruction to our tyrants. Forward then with confident courage, in the certain expectation of divine aid, for God will permit no peace between you and your impious adversaries."

Before the onset commenced, a young man of a noble family presented himself as a herald at the camp of the insurgents; he was seized by the command of Munzer, and immediately murdered—a faithful sign indeed of the spirit by which the fanatic was guided. This spectacle infuriated the royalists; and in the unequal combat which ensued the rebels were vanquished with great slaughter and little resistance, as they stood singing a hymn to the Holy Spirit, and awaiting the promised succour from above. Munzer fell into the hands of the conquerors. The bearing of the prisoner did not, in the first instance, disgrace his former pretensions. To the questions of George of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse he firmly replied that he had in nowise exceeded

his commission, and that the princes who had persecuted the doctrine of the gospel were to be resisted as he had resisted them. "Reflect," said Duke George to him, when on the application of the torture he cried aloud with pain, "reflect on the agonies of those wretched men, whom you have this day deluded to their destruction." "Even thus," he replied, with a disdainful laugh, "even thus they would have it." But afterwards, when the hour of execution approached, he displayed a more moderate and reasonable temper. He made a public confession of his error and his crime; and then, though encompassed by the soldiery, he raised his voice to exhort the princes to show greater mercy towards their wretched subjects—thus would they be thereafter exempt from similar perils. At the same time he admonished them to study at least that portion of the Holy Scriptures which relates to the duties of kings. He then received the communion, and suffered.

The death of Munzer may be considered as the termination of this dreadful affair; which began in the oppression of the princes and nobles, which was inflamed by the admixture of religious incentives, and which closed in almost* every instance with the defeat and slaughter of the insurgents. In the harangues of their

* The peasants of Rhingau, who had great complaints against the Chapter of Erbach, came to terms on various conditions, partly civil, partly religious. The latter were these: That evangelical priests should be chosen by the people with perfect liberty; that they should be no longer persecuted; that they should be maintained by a general impost of a thirtieth, and that tithes should be altogether abolished; that no more monks or nuns should be received into the convents, and that those then in that condition should be free to throw it off; that the mendicants should be suppressed; that ecclesiastics should no longer be exempt from public burdens. This treaty was signed by the Bishop of Strasburg, Vicar of the Archbishop of Mayence in that country, and by the Chapter and Abbot of Erbach. Beaus. iii. 175.

chiefs and in the proclamations of their wrongs they demanded in the same breath two essential boons—civil liberty and the gospel; and however false the notions that they may have attached both to the one and to the other, they showed at least a strong, though in some degree a misconceived, persuasion, that they had spiritual, as well as civil, rights, and that no earthly authority could justly deprive them of the means of eternal salvation. This naked principle was intelligible to the rudest understanding, and may have been felt by the most illiterate peasant; it was unquestionably derived from the works of Luther, and it may have been the only truth contained in them that was universally disseminated. For the provinces first and most disturbed were those (as has been mentioned) in which the doctrine of the Reformation was least known; and the unfortunate men, who composed the mass of the rebels, were the poorest and most ignorant in the community.

It is probable, moreover, that there were some among them who, though somewhat better instructed in Luther's principles, yet misunderstood and misapplied them. His opinions concerning Christian or evangelical liberty, however carefully guarded by the strongest declarations of civil allegiance, may easily have misled the half-informed into a belief that he advocated the overthrow of every form of despotism, and resisted the power and privileges of the constituted authorities of the empire. The extreme violence, with which he so repeatedly denounced the frauds, vices and extortions of the ecclesiastical rulers of the people, may have given birth to the notion that he was hostile to all governments. And when he spoke of liberty, he might be represented, in the interpretation of the vulgar, to mean licentiousness and anarchy. To this extent the writings of Luther may have contributed to give a direction to this lamentable affair, and to furnish,

as it might happen, principles, motives, or pretexts to those engaged in it; but to this their influence was clearly confined.

Yet as the papal party, both in that and in after ages, has endeavoured to fasten the crime of those calamities, not only upon his principles but upon himself; and derived a plausible argument against his cause from the mischiefs immediately connected with it; and even ventured to describe as Lutherans the oppressed, misguided and ignorant horde which committed and suffered all those atrocities; it becomes necessary to examine with some attention the course adopted by the reformer in this conjuncture, one of the most critical in his life.

As early as August 14, 1524, Luther, who had long penetrated the spirit of Munzer, addressed a warning to the senate of Mulhausen, to refuse admission to so dangerous an adventurer. He assured them of his seditious designs and character; he reminded them of his proceedings at Zwickau and Alstadt; that he had emissaries everywhere deluding the people; that his doctrine was no less absurd and ignorant than seditious; that he ought to be proved and questioned respecting the origin and author of his commission; that, should he refer it immediately to God, some sign should be required of him in attestation of his claim; since it was God's usage, whensoever He departed from the ordinary course of his Providence, to declare his will by some supernatural manifestation.* I may here remark that this test, which might be applied with perfect fairness to every pretender to immediate communication with the Deity, was pecu-

* "Wenn er sagt: Gott und sein Geist hab ihm gesandt, wie den Apostel: so lasst ihn dasselb beweisen mit Zeichen und Wunder, oder wehret ihm das predigen; denn wo Gott die ordentliche weise will ändern, so thut er allwege Wunderzeichen dabey." Luther's Letters, Aug. 14, 1524. De Wette.

liarily appropriate in its application to Munzer ; since it supposed no other doctrine in himself than that which he was impressing day by day upon his disciples. If an evident sign from God might certainly be obtained, as he perpetually assured them, by their prayers, doubtless the same divine interposition would not be refused to his own.

A few days afterwards (Aug. 21) Luther wrote to the Princes Frederick and John of Saxony a similar epistle, in strong denunciation of the doctrines and designs of Munzer, and containing sentiments to the following purport: "Now this is to me an especial pleasure that such are not our proceedings, since these people are themselves making boast that they are not of our party and have learnt nothing from us ; no, they come direct from heaven, and hear God himself converse with them as with His angels, and it is a miserable doctrine that is taught at Wittemberg, about faith and love and the cross of Christ ! God's voice you must hear with your own ears, they cry ; God's work you must endure and experience in your own persons. They say nothing of the Scriptures—only about Bibel, Bubel, Babel. I have never read or heard of a spirit more lofty and inflated than this. . . . I have heard that fellow formerly at Wittemberg express his opinion that this work can only make progress by the sword ; whence I conclude that it is his design to overthrow all secular authorities, and establish himself as Lord in the World.

"They say that they are moved by the Spirit ; but surely that is a very bad spirit which exerts itself in pulling down temples and monasteries and burning images. The greatest villains can do such things as these. They resist all enquiry into their principles. They talk pompously in private corners and inflame the

minds of the deluded multitude, but will not open their mouths before any whom they see disposed to examine the grounds of their pretensions. I augured no good of them since they refused to disclose their sentiments before their evangelical friends at Wittemberg. They look on me as a lifeless Christian, as one who was never favoured with hearing a voice from heaven. . . . It is not my wish that any persons, no not these fanatics, should be prevented from preaching. Let them have free liberty of exhibiting the best specimens they can of their erudition. Let them teach, but keep their hands from violence. Otherwise, if they will persist in their ferocious seditious practices, it will be your duty to banish them from your dominions. The war of an evangelist is of a spiritual nature. He is to preach and bear the cross. We nowhere read that either Christ or his Apostles pulled down temples or images. But when the divine word had penetrated the hearts of men, the heathen churches and images of themselves fell to the ground. We ought to act in the same manner. Had I attempted, like those prophets, to bring about this revolution by violence, I might have levelled a thousand buildings; but the minds of men would have been enchained in darkness, as before, and the salvation of souls not at all promoted.

“Wherefore I will humbly entreat your highnesses to oppose such turbulence, that we may proceed in this affair no otherwise than by the word of God, as is becoming in Christian men; and thus will you turn aside the cause of a commotion, to which Mr. Everybody is already far too well inclined. . . .”*

* “Hiebey will ich diesmal lassen bleiben und E. F. G. untherthäniglich gebetten haben, dags sie mit ernst zu solchem sturmen und schwürmen thun, auf dass . . . ursach der aufruhr, dazu sonst Herr omnes mehr als zuviel geneiget ist, verhütet werde.”

Before the outbreak of the rebellion Luther published a general exhortation to peace and subordination.* And at the same time he admonished the clergy, whom he observed to be especially moved by the terror of the impending calamity, to repent and amend. For, though he did not expect, as some expected, the general massacre of the sacred order, yet was it clear enough, he said, that the wrath of God was abroad, and that their sins had contributed to bring down the visitation. He then proceeded to advise the people, on the one hand, to show all obedience to their magistrates; the magistrates, on the other, to remove the grievances of the people, diligently to provide for their religious wants, to reject the corruptions of the faith and to remove without any violence the errors and abuse of the papacy. He argued with great force against the impolicy, as well as the wickedness, of civil commotion: That there was nothing rational in sedition; that the most innocent in such cases were usually the greatest sufferers; and that the movers of turbulence were inexcusable, even when the cause was just. His counsel was, that the progress of a good principle should be left to the peaceful operation of reason and prayer; that truth should be established and imposture cast down by the power of conviction, gradually working upon the public mind and leading it step by step to contempt for the fabrications of man; that these were the only means which he had at any time employed in the accomplishment of his own mission, and that he devoutly trusted by the same means, through the quiet propagation of the gospel, to bring his work to a speedy conclu-

* "Eyn Freu Vormanung M. Luther allen Christen sich zu vorhüten für aufruhr und empörung." Dated from Wittemberg. Under this peaceful title it contains however some very severe remarks on the Pope and the papists.

sion, so that he who had but recently laid its foundations might with his own hands perfect it.

Much more might be cited to the same effect, but the above is sufficient to place the principles of Luther beyond the possibility of a doubt, not merely because he made profession of them, but because they were the wisest that he could have adopted, and because his manner of defending them proves that he thoroughly understood them and knew their wisdom.

These exhortations having failed of all effect, let us now observe his conduct during the progress of the insurrection. The Swabian rebels published twelve demands, which were immediately circulated in every part of Germany, as a sort of general manifesto of the complaints of all. They were in substance as follow: That they should be permitted to choose their own religious ministers, who should preach the word of God in purity, without any admixture of human decrees, and inculcate the vital doctrine of justification by faith alone; that they should pay no further tithes, except of corn;* and that these should be appropriated partly to the ministers of the church, partly to the support of the poor, partly to public purposes; that they should be released from the condition of servitude, as being unworthy of the liberty which all had acquired by the blood of Christ. They disclaimed any wish to withdraw themselves by this condition from the sacred authority of the magistrate; but they declined the yoke of slavery, unless it could be proved to rest on clear Scriptural testimony. The eight demands which followed related to the right of fishing and of the chase, especially that of destructive animals; to the common use of the forests; to charges, imposi-

* Sleidan, l. v. p. 76.

tions, tributes, land taxes, fines and other exactions and usurpations; and in the last they protested that, if they were in error in respect to any of these articles, they were ready to retract, provided only they could be convinced by Scripture; that they would not accept any concession or privilege contrary to that holy law, but that they reserved to themselves the right of making any further claim conformable to religion and to natural justice.

Besides this public remonstrance—which professed to rest, be it observed, on the fundamental religious principle of Luther, and was in one or two places expressed in his very words—they had made somewhat earlier a personal appeal to himself. This was composed in a spirit of great moderation; and with a firm determination to shake off the oppression of slavery, it united the strongest professions of reverence for the established authorities.* It does not appear that Luther made any separate reply to this address; but the manifesto of the peasants called from him, in the month of May, an elaborate and very important paper which we must not leave unnoticed.

After some preliminary remarks respecting the troubles which were visiting the earth through God's displeasure at the sins of mankind, he turned round to the princes and nobles:—"To you especially, blind bishops, insensate priests and monks, who do not desist even to this day from your stupid stormings and ragings against the gospel, though you know where the truth is, and that no man can confute it; in your secular government you do nothing but tax and fleece, for the support of your pomp and arrogance, till the poor common people can possibly endure the thing no longer. The sword is on

* Marheinecke (tom. ii. p. 120) refers to Strobel in *S. Beiträgen*, ii. § 25.

your neck, yet you sit, as you think, so fast in the saddle that no human power can unhorse you. This very security and insolence of pride will be the means of your destruction. God is wont sometimes to vent his indignation against princes; and if, in spite of my repeated admonitions, you refuse to amend your lives, the wrath of heaven will redound upon your heads. Those are not propitious omens which we see everywhere about us. It is through God's anger that false teachers are permitted to have such weight among us; hence proceeds too that popular sedition which will lay all Germany waste, unless God shall be moved by our prayers to vouchsafe some remedy. Things are now in this condition that men neither can, nor will, nor ought to endure your dominion any longer. You must entirely change your character, and yield to the Word of God; for though the people should fail in this attempt, others will succeed, I repeat it; and though you should destroy these present insurgents, God will presently raise up others; for it is His work—it is He who wages war against you, and takes vengeance on your impiety.

“ In respect to the charges which are brought against me, as having originated this confusion, you know that from the very beginning I have inculcated moderation and peaceable deportment and civil subordination; nay, I have even exhorted them to endure you and your impious tyranny, and you are my witnesses that I have done so. The blame then is not mine; but it is properly charged upon those bloodthirsty prophets, who detest me as much as you do, and who for more than three years have been deluding these people, and to whom no one has offered any manful resistance except myself alone; and if it were really my wish to revenge myself upon you, I might laugh in secret as a spectator of your

troubles, or even lend my aid to aggravate them ; but from that crime my God will continue to preserve me, as He has done hitherto."

He next exhorted the princes to the exercise of mercy, and pointed out the obvious justice of some of the demands of the peasants.

Then he turned to these last ; and while he acknowledged that there were princes who, through their prohibition of the gospel and other unpardonable oppressions, were entirely unworthy to reign, yet the people, he asserted, were equally bound to examine the justice of their own cause, and to see whether they had not been misled by false teachers who, under the cloak of the gospel, were doing the work of Satan. In a tone of brotherly and respectful affection,* he applied to their proceedings the test of the gospel ; he showed how imperfectly they had been instructed in its true meaning and spirit ; and how vain a pretext it was to plead religion in justification of their violence. All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. . . If their rulers had committed crimes, that did not excuse other crimes in them ; and there was no precept more clearly laid down in the divine law than the duty of civil obedience. The same duty was no less founded in natural law and natural justice : every reason combined to establish it as sacred and universal.

" You perceive not, that, in your endeavours to advance the gospel, you are inflicting upon it the greatest imaginable injury. Lay aside then the appellation of Christian ; do not dare to veil a turbulent, inhuman, unchristian enterprise under the name of Christ. I will never give nor allow you that name, but both by

* He calls them his " lieben freunde," his " lieben herren und brüder."

my writings and words will strive to tear it from you, so long as a single vein shall flow in my body. If you shall retain it, I will profess myself your enemy. I will importune Heaven with prayer, though I trust that you will not so proceed as to have my prayers recorded against you; for, sinner as I am, I doubt not that here would be just occasion for me to offer up my petitions, and that they would not be offered in vain."

He then exhorted them to employ prayer rather than violence for the attainment of their own purposes:—"Which is there among you who has implored the aid of God for his cause?—Scarcely one. No, you place your confidence in arms and brute force; yet those who are truly Christian do nothing with violence, but endure and weary Heaven with prayer, as the example of holy men in all ages demonstrates; for this is the only means of safety, the only path of peace. But you disregard this, and neither offer prayers nor exhibit patience, but place all your hopes in yourselves; therefore shall you find no grace with God. You may indeed, through His sufferance, have some partial success; but even that will recoil to your perdition. This is answer enough to your demands, that, though they were founded in equity and natural justice, yet they have this essential inconsistency, that you would wrest them by force from the authorities—an attempt at variance with equity and common justice. He who composed them is not a good man; for he misrepresents and perverts the texts of Scripture which he cites to inflame you, and which, when more closely and faithfully examined, not only do not favour, but are even directly opposed to you. . . ."

He then proceeded to their demands, and treated them with much greater severity than in his address to the princes. Respecting the first, it was his opinion that the ministers should be appointed by the civil authority,

as being the dispenser of the funds for their support; and that the pastors, who might be chosen by the people should be supported by the people. He argued that their claim in regard to tithes was entirely unjust, and equivalent to an overthrow of all temporal power. As to the abolition of slavery:—"What means this?" he said. "Did not Abraham, and other holy men, possess slaves? Read St. Paul: he will instruct you in your determinations about slaves. This demand then is connected with violence and rapine, and is in direct opposition to the gospel; for, though one be a slave, he may be holy nevertheless, and enjoy the liberty of a Christian. But your real object is to reduce all men to an equality, while the very essence of social life and civil administration consists in the distinction of conditions, that some may be free while others are slaves, that some may govern while others obey. . . ."

In a well intended and dispassionate peroration, after throwing some blame on both parties—after censuring the various oppressions of the one, the violent rebellion of the other—he exhorted them to accommodate their differences by mutual concessions; to this end he advised them to refer the matters in dispute to the arbitration of a council chosen from among the leaders of both sides; and then with some ardent prayers, offered not without distrust, for the averting of the threatened calamities, he concluded.

That this pacific spirit and abhorrence of the principles of rebellion were not peculiar to Luther, but common to the other chiefs of the Reformation, is proved by a tract written at the same time by Melancthon,* upon the same subject. At the desire of the Elector Palatine

* "Schrift P. Melancthons widder die Artikel der Bawrschafft.—

Ἀφρητῶρ ἀθεμιστὸς ἀνέστιός ἐστιν ἐκεῖνος

Ὅς πολέμου ἐράται ἐπιδημίου ὀκρυοέντος."

he composed some remarks upon the twelve articles, and they all tended to the same conclusion: That it was above all things sinful to oppose the authorities established by God; that a real Christian should rather endure any oppression and suffering; that personal slavery was not inconsistent with Christian liberty; that the preaching of the gospel ought not to be advocated by violence and uproar; that insubordination had nothing in common with evangelical doctrine, but was rather a scandal to the profession of truth: and while on the one hand he gave loose to some very harsh expressions of invective against the German populace,* on the other he exhorted the princes to bear themselves with moderation and mercy, to allow the gospel its free course, to permit the marriage of spiritual persons, to apply the monastic revenues to the uses of the poor, and above all to conciliate their subjects by kindness and mercy.

But the voice of humanity and reason was lost in the tumult of fanatical sedition. The insurrection spread more widely, and grew more lawless and sanguinary as it spread. It advanced nearer to the Saxon territory; it threatened the very heart of the Electorate, the very home of Luther. His energy did not then desert him. He made great personal exertions for the preservation of peace. On Easter Sunday, after preaching, he set out on an expedition to the disturbed provinces. He visited Seeburg, Nordhausen, Weimar, Orlamund, Kala and Jena, and by his sermons and other public addresses produced some partial effect; but the storm continued notwithstanding, and he had now been an eyewitness of its ravages. Under these circumstances his equanimity

* “Es ist ein solch ungezogen, murthwillig, blutgierig Volk, die Teutschen, das mans billig viel härter halten sollte.”—Marhein., tom. ii. p. 120, cites Melancthon's History of Thomas Munzer.

deserted him and was succeeded by feelings that were positively vindictive. He forgot his lofty character of mediator between an insulted but tyrannical authority, and an offending but suffering people. He forgot that magnanimous impartiality, which had just held almost with an even hand the balance between despotism and rebellion; and, unhappily for his present and future reputation, he gave a fierce and lasting expression to the bitterness of his soul.*

“In my former tract,” thus he said in substance, “I did not venture to condemn the peasants, because they offered themselves to reason and better instruction. But, before I could look about me, forth they rush with violence, unmindful of their professions, and commit brutal acts of devastation and fury; whence one perceives what is the real meaning of their false pretensions and how vain are all the pleas that they have advanced in the name of the gospel and in their twelve articles. In short, it is purely the work of the devil that they are doing, and especially that of the archdevil, who presides at Muhlhausen, and directs nothing but robbery, murder and bloodshed. This then is no time for slumber; this is no moment for indulgence or compassion. It is the moment for the sword and for vengeance, not for mercy.†

“In three respects the offences of the peasants against God and man are so frightful as to deserve death both of body and of soul. First—having sworn faith and obedient allegiance to their rulers they insolently break this obedience and rise up against their masters, thereby

* “Wider die mordischen und reubischen rotten der Bawnn.” In this, as in other instances, I follow the orthography of the original edition, as I find it in the “Autographa Reformatorum” in the Bodleian.

† “Darumb ist hie nicht zu schlaffen. Es gibt auch nicht die gedult hie, oder barm herzigkeit. Es ist des schwerts und zorns zeit hie, und nicht der gnaden zeit.”

forfeiting body and soul, as faithless, perjured, lying and rebellious scoundrels and miscreants. Next—they excite tumults and plunder monasteries and castles which do not belong to them; wherefore, let any man, who has the power, smite, strangle and stab them, in private and in public, and consider in so doing that nothing can be more poisonous, scandalous and diabolical than a seditious man. Smite them down as you would destroy mad dogs; if you smite them not, they will smite you and all the land with you. Thirdly—it is a frightful sin that they assume the veil of the gospel, that they call themselves Christian brothers, that they take oaths of confederacy and constrain others to associate with them in these horrors. Thus are they made of all men the greatest sinners against God and defamers of His holy name; and do in fact honour and serve the devil under the show of the gospel, whereby they well deserve death tenfold, both in body and soul. . . .

“Such wonderful times are these that a prince may merit heaven by shedding of blood better than others can by prayer.* And whosoever shall perish, conscientiously fighting the battles of the authorities, will stand a genuine martyr in the presence of God, since he walks in God’s word and obedience. On the other hand, whosoever shall perish on the side of the peasants will be an eternal torch in hell (ein ewiger höllen-brandt), since he

* “Solch wunderliche zeytens eind jetzt dags ein Fürst den himel mit blütvergiessen verdienen kan, dann andere mit beten.” Cochlæus did not lose so fair an occasion for an attack on Luther as this production afforded him. He republished it clause by clause with severe remarks. On the above he observed ingeniously—“Thou dost not utter this, Luther, as thine own opinion, but from the sanguinary thirst and inspiration of the old homicide, the enemy of man. For hitherto, of thine own opinion, thou hast always denied that any man can deserve heaven, thou hast taken away every merit from the holy ones of God. . . .” Autographa Reformatorum. Bodl. Oxf.

draws the sword against God's word and obedience, and is a limb of the devil. Meanwhile mercy ought to be shown to prisoners and to all who have been reluctantly forced into the sedition. Wherefore, beloved nobles, release, aid and compassionate these poor men ; but as to the rest, stab, crush, strangle them who can. And if you fall in strife well is it for you, since you can never meet a holier death. Those who will not hear me I pray God to enlighten and convert them. As to those who will not be converted, may God grant them neither happiness nor prosperity ! This is the speech of every pious Christian. Amen !”*

These his horrible denunciations of a vengeance almost demoniacal against those misguided wretches, whose crime demanded indeed punishment, but punishment tempered by compassion, and of whose offence some peculiar and aggravating circumstances were unquestionably occasioned by his own doctrines, were not the mere explosion of a transient and rash resentment, to be effaced by tears of contrition and shame ; no, they were the deliberate offspring of his reason and his religion. For, when he found that they were received, even in the fierce

* “ Darumb, lieber Herren, loset hie, retet hie, helfft hie, erbaumpt euch der armen leute, Steche, schlage, würde hie der kan.” In a letter to Amsdorf, of May 30, 1525, Luther wrote as follows : “ Novam gloriam mihi nuntias, quod adulator Principum vocer. . . . Ego sic sentio ; melius esse omnes Rusticos cædi quam principes et magistratus, eo quod Rustici sine auctoritate Dei gladium accipiunt. Quam nequitiam Satanæ sequi non potest nisi Satanica vastitas regni Dei. Et mundi Principes, etsi excedunt, tamen gladium auctoritate Dei gerunt. Ibi utrumque regnum consistere potest. Quare nulla misericordia, nulla patientia rusticis debetur, sed ira et indignatio Dei et hominum. . . . Hos ergo justificare, horum misereri, illis favere est Deum negare, blasphemare et de cælo velle dejicere. Hoc dic istis vestris concionatoribus ut audeant et tentent, sed me non consentiente, imo eorum studia maledicente in nomine Domini.” (No. 708.)

excitement of the moment, with much disapprobation*—when he heard himself accused by some of unchristian harshness, by others of base servility towards the great—he published a defence† in every respect worthy of the production that it attempted to justify. Indeed, in this still more atrocious composition, he seems to have repented even of the scanty doling out of mercy with which he had leavened the former, and he retracted more than half of his niggardly humanity. He now maintained that pardon should be extended to those only who on admonition should surrender themselves; that those, who might have been forced into the conspiracy and driven to acts of violence by the positive compulsion of the multitude, should be involved in the same destruction with the most eager criminals. And he even went out of his way to prove, that any, who might have committed violence short of murder, were not on that account to be distinguished from their sanguinary associates.‡

It is disgusting enough to peruse the naked records of indiscriminate carnage, to read of acts of massacre, perpetrated under any circumstances and excused by any necessity; and it is most so when those acts are committed by a servile soldiery upon an oppressed and deluded multitude. But it is far more revolting to read a deliberate apology for such acts; to see the man of

* Luther thus wrote, on June 15, to John Rühel and others, in a letter inviting them to his wedding-feast: “Welch ein zettergeschrey hab ich angericht mit dem Büchlein wider die Bauern! Da ist alles vergessen, das Got der Welt durch mich gethan hat. Nun sind Herrn, Pfaffen, Bauern, alles wider mich, und dräuen mir den tod.” (No. 715.)


† “Sendbrief vom harten Büchlein wider die Bauren.” It was addressed to Gaspar Müller, Chancellor of Mansfeldt; and is much longer, calmer and more deliberate than the other—“Ich will hie nichts hören noch wissen von baumherzigkeit.” He places his defence entirely on Scriptural grounds.

‡ Sleidan, lib. v. p. 82. Seckendorf, lib. ii. sect. 3, § iii.

peace exciting from his closet or his pulpit the fury of the avenger; to see the sword whetted and the trumpet blown by the ministers of Christ, and that too in the name of Christ, and for the maintenance of His pure truth, and for the glory of the gospel of mercy. It is in vain to seek an apology for such a proceeding in the wild habits and uncivilised barbarity of the age. That might indeed be some plea for the soldiers who committed the massacres—it certainly was no slight excuse for the outrages of the uneducated insurgents—but it was none for the ferocity of Luther. He professed to stand on higher principles. He made his appeal to that everlasting law, which belongs to no particular age or place, and is capable of no change. He presented himself before the world in no humbler character, than that of the advocate and missionary of God's word. *There* was the only source of his power and his distinction. We compare his actions with the precepts there delivered. We compare his expressed feelings with the spirit breathing there. We confront him with that blessed law of love and charity which he so fervently prescribed to others, and we judge him accordingly. We can do no more than this, and we ought to do no less. But after all, it is in ignorance that we judge. The final sentence rests with Him, to whom the heart is known.

But the fairest, though it may be the severest, commentary on these two productions of Luther is furnished by the tone adopted by Frederick, almost at the same moment—and in a prince menaced by the rebellion of his subjects inhumanity might have been less unpardonable. When solicited to assist in the forcible suppression of these commotions he wrote to his brother John, on the 14th of April, to this effect: That this was far too important an affair to be treated with mere violence; that

some cause had been given for discontent, especially by the prohibition of the word of God; and that the poor people had likewise suffered many other oppressions, both from their spiritual and their temporal rulers. A few days later, very shortly before his death, he again addressed to his brother expressions of compassion and piety, suggesting; That God, who had hitherto protected his dominions, would not now withdraw his safeguard; and that this blindness of the people could not be of long continuance. And then with his dying breath he besought his successor to be sparing in the effusion of blood; to show mercy upon the miserable multitude, and to punish none, but the leaders who had deluded them. "This," he added, "is the last communication that you will ever receive from me; for the hand of death is upon me, and we are now about to be separated, that we may meet again in a more blessed abode."



CHAPTER XXIII.

ERASMUS.

Erasmus had not declared for the Reformation—his cautious character—ecclesiastical principles—his own defence of his earlier proceedings—his correspondence with Pope Adrian—and letters of advice—his dispute with Hütten—‘The Sponge’—Luther’s conduct towards him—his letter of April, 1524—reply of Erasmus—publication of his ‘Diatribē’ and explanatory letter to Melancthon—his correspondence with Henry VIII. on that subject—his angry letter to Œcolampadius—efforts of the great to gain him to the papal party—remarks on his probable motives—his subject chosen skilfully—positions defended in the Diatribē—obscurity of the subject—common reputation of the work—after some deliberation, Luther replies by the *Servo Arbitrio*—principles asserted in that work—various opinions regarding it—violence and injustice of the invectives against Erasmus—reply of the latter in the two Books of the *Hyperaspistes*—his letter of remonstrance to the Elector of Saxony—supposed opinion of Melancthon—doctrine of the Saxon church—henceforward Erasmus hates the Reformers—specimens of his abuse—his letter to Vulturius Neocomus—more invectives against the reformers—object of that letter—to confirm the established principle that heretics might, and sometimes should, be punished with death—quotations—moment chosen for the publication—the Address to the brethren of Lower Germany—in defence of that letter—strong assertion of the impiety of heresy—courteous expressions of Erasmus towards Melancthon—letter written after the publication of the Diatribē—containing an overture from Campeggio—Melancthon’s reply—rejoinder of Erasmus—suspension of their correspondence—qualities common to them—respects in which they differed—Erasmus probably never quite understood the magnanimity of Luther—charge of epicurism alleged by Luther against Erasmus and frequently repeated, without any just ground—concluding remarks.

NOTWITHSTANDING the recent progress of the Reformation, it must have given some mortification to its chiefs, that they could not count as a partner in their triumphs

the most distinguished scholar in Christendom. In their disputes with the papal party they constantly employed the arms of polite literature against the old scholastic fallacies, and gloried in the association of their cause with the light of learning* and the advance of general civilisation. With antiquity, prescription, prejudice, authority opposed to them, they eagerly appealed to the new resources unfolded by the revival of letters. Yet the most eminent proficient in those studies, the man quite singularly endowed with literary talents and enjoying a reputation and dominion in that field quite uncontested, had not declared in their favour.

Again, nothing had so much recommended them to the people as their bold attacks on the vices and ignorance of the clergy; and even more especially of the monastic orders; this was one of their strongest grounds, one on which the common principles and feelings of the whole Christian world went along with them. Yet the man, who had previously exposed and stigmatised those evils with the greatest force and courage, who was almost at open war with Dominicans, Sophists, Concubinaries, with all that was most offensive and corrupt in the church, had not allowed himself to be numbered among them. On the contrary, he appeared to be receding farther from them, as they became more powerful and confident. This singularity calls for some examination into the personal character, the ecclesiastical principles, and the particular circumstances of Erasmus.

It might seem unjust to impute moral timidity to the man who had deserved by his biting sarcasms the hatred of more than half the church. Yet the circumspection which regulated all his proceedings has the appearance

* Erasmus to Albertus Pius. Basilea, 6to Id. Oct., 1525 : "Quotquot apud Germanos et Elvetios amant bonas literas, initio erant Luthero addictissimi."

of fearfulness, when contrasted with the movements of Luther. Let us refer to his own writings. In 1521 he addressed Richard Pace, Dean of St. Paul's, as follows:*

"I wish some God would interpose to bring to a sudden and happy termination this drama which Luther has so inauspiciously commenced. He has himself supplied his enemies with the weapon for his destruction; he has acted as if determined to perish, though frequently warned by my letters and the mouths of his friends to temper the edge of his style. For there is so much bitterness in him that, even if he had written nothing but the purest truth, the affair could not have ended happily. And I fear that the Jacobites and theologians will use their victory with little moderation. . . . I now at length perceive that it was the design of the Germans to drag me, whether I would or not, into the affair of Luther—in truth an ill-advised design, rather tending to alienate me. Or, what aid could I have afforded to Luther, had I consented to share his peril, except that two would perish instead of one? I am unable to express my astonishment at the spirit in which he has written; but I am certain that he has cast great odium on the lovers of literature. He has produced many admirable instructions and admonitions; and I wish that he had not vitiated his good doings by intolerable faults. But if everything

* Dated Brussels, July 5. "Utinam huic Fabulæ, quam parum auspicato exorsus est Lutherus, Deus aliquis ἀπὸ μηχανῆς felicem imponat finem. Dedit ipse telum hostibus suis quo confoderetur. . . . Aut quid ego possem optulari Luthero, si me periculi comitem fecissem, nisi ut pro uno perirent duo? Quo spiritu ille scriperit non possum satis demirari; certe bonarum literarum cultores ingenti gravavit invidia. . . . Quod si omnia pie scripsisset, non tamen erat animus ob veritatem capite periclitari. Non omnes ad martyrium satis habent roboris; vereor autem, ne, siquid inciderit tumultus, Petrum sim imitaturus. Pontificis et Cæsaris bene decernentis sequor quod pium est; male statuentis fero quod tutum est."

that he has written were holy, I have still no disposition to risk death for the sake of truth. All men have not firmness enough for martyrdom; and for my own part I fear that if any trouble should befall me I should imitate the example of Peter. If Pope or Emperor decree right, I follow what is holy: if wrong, I endure what is safe. I think this course allowable even to good men, if there be no hope of advantage from the opposite."

The correspondence of Erasmus furnishes other proofs of his disinclination to incur any personal danger in support of his opinions, though he has seldom avowed it unreservedly. And as the preceding composition was written soon after the publication of the Edict of Worms, and in a city where the Emperor's authority was paramount, we can account for the panic, which consigned to destruction both Luther and his cause so prematurely.

His ecclesiastical principles were those of a moderate and cautious Reformer. In dealing with the Roman church he would have removed the most glaring abuses, but retained all the essentials. He would have purified the monasteries, he would have amended the morals of the clergy, he would have abated the superstitious observances, he would have improved the system of the schools,* and, above all, he would have enlarged the means of literary education, and expelled the prevailing ignorance from every department of the church. But he would have maintained the authority and prerogatives of the Pope, as the final appeal in the interpretation of Scripture, as the centre of religious unity, as a restraint on the despotism of the prelacy, as a refuge for the faithful of every land against the oppressions of their secular tyrants. To the power of the church he expressed his

* "*Scholæ non tam aspernandæ sunt, quam ad studia magis sobria revocandæ.*"—Erasmus to Luther, May 30, 1519.

unbounded devotion in language sometimes overstepping his habitual caution: "With me the authority of the church has so much weight, that I could be of the same opinion with Arians and Pelagians, had the church signified its approbation of their doctrines.* It is not that the words of Christ are not to me sufficient; but it should not seem strange if I follow the interpretation of the church, through whose authority it is, that I believe the canonical Scriptures. Others may have more genius and courage than I; but there is nothing in which I acquiesce more confidently than the decisive judgment of the church: as to reasonings and arguings there is no end to them. . . ."

Accordingly, his voice was raised for peace. "Discord is so hateful to me, that truth itself would displease me if coupled with sedition;† and though there are many practices in the church which could be removed with great advantage to the Christian religion, yet no change will have my approbation which is conducted with tumult." Hence the disquietude with which he heard the thunders of Luther. "As yet," he said in 1521,‡ "I

* Erasmus to Bilibald Pirkheimer, ann. 1527. "Apud me tantum valet (ecclesiæ autoritas) ut cum Arianis et Pelagianis sentire possim, si probasset ecclesia quod illi docuerunt. Nec mihi non sufficiunt verba Christi; sed mirum videri non debet, si sequor interpretem ecclesiam, cujus auctoritate persuasus credo Scripturis canonicis. . . ."

† Erasmus to Peter Barbitius, August 13, 1521.

‡ To Justus Jonas, Louvain, May 10, 1521. "Hæc quæ tecum nunc ago, mi Jona, velim agas cum Philippo et si qui sint alii Philippo similes. Ante omnia censeo vitandum esse dissidium, nulli bono non perniciosum. Et ita sancta quadam vafritie tempori serviendum, ne tamen prodatur thesaurus evangelicæ veritatis, unde corrupti mores publici possint restitui. . . . Semper correctum malui quam oppressum. Optabam illum sic tractare Christi negotium, ut ecclesiæ proceribus aut probaretur, aut certe non reprobaretur. Sic amari cupiebam Lutherum, ut palam et tuto posset amari. . . ." There is not in Erasmus's works a single passage more characteristic of the author than this.

have only skimmed his works, but I find much in his manner that offends me. Truth is in itself a thing bitter enough to most people; it is an office seditious enough in itself to tear up long-established practices; it would have been more discreet to soften by civil management a matter by its very nature distasteful, than to heap hatred upon hatred. . . . I admit that any deceit is unworthy of a Christian: yet there may be seasons when truth is properly suppressed; and it is always of consequence when, and before whom, and in what manner it is propounded. . . . Let me beg you to discourse on this matter with Philip Melancthon and any others who may resemble him. Above all, avoid dissension, a thing destructive of every good; and be careful to serve the times with a sort of holy craft, yet in such manner as not to betray the treasure of evangelical truth, whence the corrupted morality of the public may be restored. Perhaps it will be asked whether my feelings towards Luther are altered? By no means. I have always wished that he would continue to handle, though in a somewhat different manner, the philosophy of the gospel. I have always preferred his correction to his destruction; I have wished him so to treat the interests of Christ as to please, or at least not to displease, the peers of the church. I have desired to see him enjoying that sort of regard which might be acknowledged openly and with safety. . . .”

Four years afterwards, while excusing to a distinguished Roman Catholic his earlier indecision, he wrote: “When the Proœmium of the Lutheran tragedy first came out and almost all the world was applauding it, I was the first of all to dissuade my friends from taking any share in a business which I foresaw would end in blood. . . . I published tracts to declare that I had no concern with Luther and never would have any. . . . I admonished

Luther himself. . . . I prevented Frobenius by threats from publishing any Lutheran work. . . . And you would give me some credit for this my resolution . . . if you knew what tumults I could have excited, had I chosen to place myself at the head of that business. . . .”*

In a letter to Melancthon, written in the preceding year, he stated some services which by his moderation he had endeavoured to render to the cause of the gospel: “I checked, as far as I was able, the clamours of the theologians; I restrained the cruel dispositions of the princes, and I do so still; I separated the cause of literature from the cause of Luther; I caught at every occasion of promoting the gospel without any breach, or at least any great breach, of peace. Nor even now do I omit any opportunity to do so, writing to the Emperor and the other princes, enacting a sort of Gamaliel, and striving to bring the drama to a happy catastrophe. . . . I have written to Pope Adrian, I have written to Clement. . . .”† It should not be forgotten that in his first letter to Luther, of May, 1519, he even then proclaimed his neutrality: “I keep as clear as I can from this affair, that I may be the better able to assist in the revival of literature. And it seems to me that civility and moderation are more conducive to success than violence.”

The honourable pursuits and migratory habits of Erasmus had connected him in a variety of ways with many of the principal personages in Christendom, both ecclesiastical and secular. Ties of literature bound him to

* To Albertus Pius, Basle, 6to Idus October, 1525. “Frobenium minis etiam coercui, nequid excuderet Lutheranum. . . . Hunc animum non omnino contemneres. . . . si scires, quot tumultus excitare potuissem, si me ducem hujus negotii voluissem profiteri.”

† Erasmus to Melancthon, Basilea, 6th October, 1524. I am not aware of the existence of any letter from Erasmus to Charles V. of an earlier date than September 2, 1527.

some of these; ties of interest, present or prospective, to others. By far the greater number of his friends and patrons adhered to the papal party; some were its very chiefs and directors; so that here was no slight obstacle to a bold and independent course. Besides, he had reached an age of life, at which established opinions and modes of action and views of interest are seldom changed, not at least through the impulse of any strong passion, or the result of any new calculation. He was sixteen years older than Luther; and certainly it would have implied a most ardent temperament had he entered with the same earnestness into the same turbulent and perilous scene. It was even something that he wavered so long; that he was neutral during the first seven critical years should be accounted to him for praise.

The earliest transactions in which Erasmus engaged with the Reformers, as far as the affair at Cologne (at the end of 1520) and the axioms so unadvisedly published, have been related in the twelfth chapter. From the quotations contained in the preceding pages it is obvious that after that time, during the conflict at Worms and under the terror of the imperial edict, he became continually more desirous to separate his name and cause from theirs. Somewhat later, in 1522 and 1523, when Adrian, his ancient friend and schoolfellow, occupied the see, he addressed him in very earnest exculpation from the charge of Lutheranism. Adrian accepted the explanation and at the same time urged him to take the field against the heresy. Erasmus proffered his counsels as to the means of extinguishing it, and the letter containing them is extant; and in this remarkable composition he made no attempt to dissemble the extent to which the evil had spread.

“Germany is a wide country, abounding with men of excellent genius. But it is not to Germany alone that

this passion is confined. I dare not express in how many regions and how entirely the love of Luther and the hatred of the pontifical name are rooted in the popular mind; nay, it is incredible how great is that perversity of spirit which they call constancy; and among them may be found a good many of those who are devoted to polite literature. It is with tears and groans that I relate this to you, most blessed father, and I would that it were not thus. . . ." After displaying in such a strain the virulence of the disease, he proceeded to the more difficult and delicate office of indicating the remedies. "First, the fountains must be explored whence this evil so continuously flows, and these must be closed; clemency must then be exhibited towards all offenders; the press must be placed under a general censorship; a hope must be held out of the reformation of all abuses—but then your holiness will say, what are those fountains? what are these changes which you recommend? For the due consideration of this subject I think that a conference should be assembled of men of every nation—men of integrity, of weight, mild, courteous, dispassionate, whose opinion——."* Erasmus left it to his infallible reader to divine the rest. Whether he indulged the fanciful vein of the moment; whether he feared by too plain admonitions to offend his pontifical master; whether he doubted how much authority he should give to his proposed assembly of immaculate men; or whether he at once perceived that no such assembly could possibly be collected together, he veiled the conclusion in a modest, though somewhat startling, aposiopesis. The Pope

* "Dicit tua Sanctitas, Qui sunt isti fontes, aut quæ sunt ista mutanda? Ad harum rerum expensionem censeo evocandos e singulis regionibus viros incorruptos, graves, mansuetos, gratiosos, sedatos affectibus, quorum sententia——." The letter seems to have been written in January, 1523.

was displeased, and the correspondence seems to have proceeded no farther.

About the same time Ulric Hütten, when driven to seek refuge in Switzerland, repaired to Basle, and courted the protection of Erasmus. He hoped that the claims of ancient friendship would be recognised even in his adversity. Erasmus repudiated them. It would have been an act of some generosity to encounter the odium, in which such patronage would then have involved him, especially as he had certainly never given any countenance to the irregularities of that military reformer. The latter was nevertheless exasperated, and issued from his concealment* a violent tract against Erasmus. He immediately replied in a little book of some celebrity, which he called 'The Sponge;'† and he prefaced it by a very courteous letter to Zwingli, in which he complained of the injustice of his former friend. In this work he adopted his favourite tone of impartial neutrality. He reproved on the one hand the vehemence and paradoxes of Luther and the arrogance of his followers; while on the other he commended whatever was true in his doctrine, and maintained that being true it was not

* "Apud Helvetios latitans. . . qui concedunt latebras, quo tutus sit interim ab his qui venantur illum ad supplicium. . ." 'Spongia.'

† "Spongia Adversus Aspergines Hutteni." In his letter of Sept. 6, 1524, to Melancthon, Erasmus mentions that he had reasons for avoiding Hütten to which he did not allude in 'the Sponge.' "In want, and destitute of everything, he was seeking some nest, where he might die. That vain-glorious soldier, cum sua scabie, was to be received then into my house, and along with him, all that chorus of so called evangelicals—evangelical in nothing but name. At Sletstadt he had levied a contribution upon all his friends. . . ." There may have been reasons enough for refusing hospitality. But, as Erasmus once wrote to Luther: "Quorundam virulentas contentiones magis conducit contemnere, quam refellere"—he should have applied this precept to the Aspergines.

the less to be revered, because it was announced by men without birth or dignity—for even such were the Apostles of Christ.

With principles thus balanced, with a mind so cautious and calculating, so fearful of violent innovation, so enamoured of literary repose; so sensible of the corruption of the church, yet so bigotted to its authority; it is probable that even to that moment he wished to steer a middle course through the troubles which he deplored, but which he could not alleviate, and to avoid, so long as the result of the struggle should be doubtful, any direct connexion with either party. Luther could not fail to watch his course with anxiety. He might not sufficiently appreciate the mere literary talents of the other; he might blame the imperfection of his doctrine, and the want of that religious ardour which inflamed himself; he might despise the vacillations of his conduct and the worldliness of his motives; but he could not overlook the position occupied by Erasmus, not among scholars only, but in the eyes of all Christendom; he could not be blind to the influence of his counsels, and what he feared much more, to the authority of his name—he was accordingly desirous, if he could not secure his adhesion, at least to avert his open hostility. And thus he treated him with a show of kindness and respect; he dissembled some taunts and occasional sarcasms, and was willing to leave him in that peaceful neutrality which he professed to covet. Perceiving, however, as things advanced, that he only receded farther from his friendship, and hearing of some peevish and menacing declarations, Luther determined by one bold and seasonable effort to prevent, if it were yet possible, a public rupture. Accordingly, he addressed to him, in April, 1524, an epistle, couched for the most part in expressions of courteous condescen-

sion, which, without positive insult, might probably intimidate a cautious and undecided character.

“I shall not complain of you for having kept aloof from us, the more independently to maintain your cause against the papists, my enemies. Nor was I much offended that in your printed books, to gain their favour or to soften their rage, you have censured us with rather too much acrimony. We perceive that the Lord has not yet conferred upon you the courage or even the discernment to join with us in free and confident opposition to the things which we deem monstrous ; nor could we venture to exact from you that, which greatly surpasses my strength and capacity. We have even borne with your weakness, and honoured that portion of the gift of God which is in you.” Then after some praise bestowed on the reviver of literature, as the means of examining the holy Scriptures in the original languages, he continued: “I never wished that forsaking your proper talents you should enter into our camp. You might indeed have aided us not a little by your wit and eloquence ; but, forasmuch as you have not courage, it was safer for you to serve in your own department. Only we feared lest our adversaries should entice you to write against our doctrines, and that necessity should then constrain us to oppose you to your face. We have prevented some persons among us, who were disposed and prepared to attack you ; and for the same reason I could have wished that the ‘Expostulation’ of Hütten had never been published, and still more that your ‘Spongia’ had not come forth ; in which matter you now feel, if I mistake not, how easy it is to say fine things about modesty and moderation, and to accuse Luther of wanting them ; and how hard and even impossible it is to be really modest and moderate, without a particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Believe me, or believe me not, Jesus Christ is my wit-

ness, I am concerned, as well as you, that the resentment of so many eminent persons has been excited against you. I must suppose that this gives you no small uneasiness ; for virtue like your's, mere human virtue, cannot exalt a man above such feelings. To tell you freely what I think, there are persons who, having this weakness also about them, cannot bear as they ought your acrimony and dissimulation, which you would pass off for prudence and modesty. These men have cause to be offended ; yet would they not be offended, had they a greater spirit. Although I also am irritable, and have been often provoked so as to use harshness of style, yet have I never acted thus, except against the hardened and incurable. My mercy and mildness towards sinful and unholy persons, however great their madness and wickedness, is well attested, not only by my own conscience, but by the evidence of many witnesses. Hitherto, I have restrained my pen, although you have provoked me ; and I promised, in letters to my friends which you have seen, that I would continue to do so, unless you should come forth openly against us. For, although you do not profess our opinions, and either condemn or hold in suspense, impiously or artfully, many leading points of holiness, yet I neither can nor will ascribe a stubborn perverseness to you. What can I do now ? Things are exasperated on both sides. I could wish, if I were mediator, that they might desist from assailing you so passionately, and suffer your old age to rest in peace in the Lord. And thus they would act, in my opinion, if they considered your imbecility, and weighed the greatness of the cause, which has long since exceeded the measure of your powers. And that the more, since our interests are now so well advanced, that there would be little peril, though Erasmus should attack us even with all his might—so far are we from fearing some of

his stings and bites. On the other hand, my dear Erasmus, you too ought to reflect on their infirmity; you ought to refrain from your sharp and spiteful figures of rhetoric; and if you cannot or dare not assert our principles, at least leave them unnoticed and treat of your own matters. It is not without some reason, even in my judgment, that they dislike your lashes; since human infirmity, when it thinks on the authority and name of Erasmus, foolishly fears them; and indeed there is more pain from a single bite of Erasmus, than from the continual grinding of all the papists.”*

Erasmus replied at length:† he asserted his claim to evangelical sincerity by the persecution that he was incessantly enduring in that cause, and his zeal in communicating the Gospel to all mankind. Respecting the doctrine of Luther, he professed much apprehension lest it should be some delusion of Satan. He declined to adopt a faith, of which he was not only not persuaded, but which he did not yet clearly comprehend: he expressed his fears for the overthrow of literature and discipline. “I have written nothing against you yet, though many princes would have applauded me, because I saw

* “Nunc autem quid faciam? Utrunque res exacerbatissima est. Ego optarem, si essem mediator, ut et illi desinerent te impetere tantis animis, sinerentque senectutem tuam cum pace in Deo obdormire. Id sane facerent mea quidem sententia, si rationem haberent tuæ imbecillitatis, et magnitudinem causæ, quæ modulum tuum jamdudum egressa est, perpenderent. Præsertim cum res eo pervenerit, ut parum sit metuendum periculum causæ nostræ, si Erasmus etiam summis viribus oppugnaret, nedum si aliquando spargit aculeos et dentes. Tamen rursus tu, mi Erasme, si illorum infirmitatem cogitares, a figuris illis Rhetoricæ tuæ salsis et amaris abstineres, ut si omnino neque potes, neque audes nostra asserere, intacta tamen dimitteres et tua tractares. . . .” Edit. Le Clerc.

† From Basle, May 5. This epistle is reported by Seckendorf (l. 1, s. 63, § 179. Addit.) from a MS. in the archives. It is not found in Le Clerc’s edition of Erasmus’s works.

that the Gospel would suffer by the deed. Only I have repressed those who would have persuaded all the princes that you and I were in league together, that we agreed on every point, and that everything that you had taught was to be found in my books. And this opinion can even now scarcely be rooted out of their minds. It matters not much to me what you may write against me, and in a worldly view nothing could befall me more propitious. But I wish to render up this soul pure unto Christ, and would that all men were in the same disposition. If you are so ready to give account to all of that faith which is in you, why take it ill that one should dispute with you, for the sake of better instruction? It may be, that Erasmus by writing against you would do better service to the Gospel than some foolish people who write in your defence, and who thus prevent me from being a mere spectator of this drama, of which I pray God that the catastrophe may not be tragical."

Very soon after this Erasmus published his celebrated *Diatribes* on Free Will. The pretext for this first act of open hostility was the irregular skirmishing of Hütten and other reformers; but the motives were deeper, and founded much less on passion than calculation. They are disclosed in his own letters written about that time, and while his mind was occupied by the subject. The following was addressed to Melancthon: * "You will wonder why I published my book on Free Will. I was assailed by a triple array of adversaries. The theologians

* Basilea, Sept. 6, 1524. "Sustinebam triplex agmen inimicorum. Theologi et bonarum literarum oses nullum non movebant lapidem, ut perderent Erasmus. Hi monarchis omnibus persuaserant, me juratissimum esse Lutheri. Itaque amici me videntes periclitari spem præbuerunt Pontifici et Principibus fore ut aliquid ederem in Lutherum. Eam spem et ipse pro tempore alui. Et interim isti, non expectato libello, cœperant me libellis lacessere. . . ."

and the haters of literature left no stone unturned to destroy Erasmus; and these persuaded all the sovereigns that I was the sworn friend of Luther. On which account my friends, seeing me in danger, gave some hope to the Pope and the Princes that I should publish something against Luther. I too for a time encouraged that hope. Meanwhile, the others, without waiting for my tract, began to attack me with theirs. So that nothing remained for me but to publish what I had written; otherwise I should have had the sovereigns for my enemies, and those noisy wranglers would have clamoured, that I was suppressing my work through fear. . . . Lastly, since that letter of Luther, in which he promises not to write against me so long as I remain quiet, is in every one's hands, it might have seemed that my silence was bargained. Besides, those who at Rome profess Gentile literature, themselves more Gentile than their books, cry out loudly against me, through national envy, as it would seem, of the Germans. So that, had I published nothing, I should have given to the theologians and monks and those Romish potters a handle more easily to persuade the pontiffs and monarchs what they were trying to persuade them. Last of all, I should have had these furious evangelicals still more violent against me. . . ."

Three years afterwards he addressed to Emser, one of the leaders of the papal party, the following expressions: "What could be more civil than my 'Diatrobe?' Yet what effect had that, but to excite the Lutherans to greater madness? I foresaw this, but I yielded to the English king and cardinal, to the Pope, and to a few learned friends; though I told them at the time what would follow. I expected nothing moderate from Luther; but such a mass of malicious calumny I did not expect."*

* Basilea, Ann. 1527. "Id non ignarus futurum tamen morem gessi Regi et Cardinali Angliæ, Pontifici, et aliquot doctis amicis, non

There are likewise extant three letters to Henry VIII. on the same subject. In the first (Sept. 4, 1523) we find: "I am attempting something against the new dogmas, but I dare not publish it till after I have left Germany, lest I should fall before I take the field. . . ." With the second, written later in the same year, he sent a copy of his yet imperfect tract: "I present to you the first transcript of my book on Free Will, against Luther. The work is not yet finished owing to ill health and occupation. But if this taste of it shall be approved by your Majesty and the body of the learned, I will finish and send it to the press elsewhere; for here, at Basle, I do not imagine that there is any printer who would dare to strike off so much as a single syllable reflecting on Luther. Against the Pope one may write what one will. Such is the present state of Germany."

In the third, dated still at Basle, on Sept. 6, 1524, he announced the publication of his work:

"Most Invincible King! It is no secret to me how disqualified I am for the field of polemics, I who have ever delighted in the sweetest gardens of the Muses. But what is there beyond my courage, when I rely on your most happy auspices? The die is cast. My book on Free Will is gone forth—a daring adventure, believe me, as matters now stand in Germany. I expect to be stoned, and indeed a few raving treatises have already been projected against my head. But I shall console myself with the example of your Majesty, which is not sacred from their ferocity. I had determined at any rate to do that which you by your letters exhort, and even to die in lending succour to the religion of Christ;

tacens interim quod esset secuturum. . . ." This *ex post facto* claim to prescience is scarcely consistent with the clause last quoted from the letter to Melancthon. Scultetus appears to assign this letter to 1524—of course erroneously.

but I shall do this with more alacrity, since your Majesty has condescended to spur me on. I pray for your perpetual prosperity.”*

There are other compositions in which Erasmus repeats, with some variations of expression, most of the above reasons for his somewhat tardy decision, but it would be wearisome to adduce them here. Yet is there one, so very strongly indicating the irritability of his feelings in respect to any insinuated connexion with the reformers, that it cannot be properly omitted. In the Preface to his Commentaries on Isaiah, Œcolampadius, the reformer of Basle, a man of piety, learning and great humanity, found occasion to mention Erasmus, and designated him as Ours—*magnus Erasmus noster*. This was his offence. He wished to associate the name of the great restorer of literature, the assailant of ecclesiastical abuses, the faithful interpreter of Scripture, with the principles, if not with the cause, of the Reformation. Erasmus was terrified, and he pretended indignation.

“I do not profess to pass sentence upon you. I leave you to the Lord, to whom you stand or fall. But I do consider what others think of you—the Emperor, the Pope, Ferdinand, the King of England, the Bishop of Chester, the Cardinal of York, and very many others, whose authority I cannot despise with safety, nor their favour without disadvantage. I will not mention the herds of monks and theologians who are now renewing their declamations, with however slight reason. All these people, who, as you well know, hold you to be heresiarchs

* The above is the entire letter. “*Jacta est alea. Exiit in lucem libellus De Libero Arbitrio—audax mihi crede facinus, ut nunc res habent Germaniæ. Expecto lapidationem; et jam nunc aliquot rabiosi libelli provolarunt in caput meum. Sed consolor meipsum exemplo Maj. tuæ, cui non parcit istorum immanitas. Decretum erat et alioqui facere id quod per literas hortaris et religioni Christianæ juvandæ immori, &c. . .*”

and the authors of schisms, what will they say when they shall read in your Preface, '*Our great Erasmus!*' . . . But there are some, you say, who suspect that you and I are on bad terms: we are not on good terms, except in regard to private friendship, which I have never refused to any one. And so, that you may remove this suspicion, entertained by I know not whom, I am to be again subjected to a suspicion fraught with much danger, and that too from princes or implacable enemies, who were at length becoming less violent, through the publication of my book on Free Will. . . . As things now stand, it would have been best that you should offer me neither your praise nor your blame. But if this may not be, let me be taunted rather than extolled by you, especially as one of '*yours.*' . . . Wherefore, if you wish me to believe that your disposition towards me is really that which you profess, you will erase the '*noster Erasmus,*' and reserve that praise for some other occasion. . . ."

It is true that great exertions were made by the heads and patrons of the church to secure his decided adhesion; and that for some time they were made in vain. Duke George of Saxony was urgent in his solicitations, convinced that the early interference of Erasmus would at once have extinguished the flame. Campeggio addressed to him three very flattering letters. He requested a personal conference with him at Nuremberg, and, in the failure of that proposal, sent messengers to Basle to receive his advice. Pope Adrian did not deem it any compromise of his dignity to require in two complimentary epistles the assistance of his counsels. He offered him a deanery too; and when that was refused, a considerable pecuniary present, which was rejected also.

* Basilea, Jan. 25, 1525.

Clement VII. was equally assiduous and more successful; but it may have been the influence of Henry VIII., even more than that of Clement, which achieved the final triumph.

All these continued efforts at least demonstrate, that the chiefs of the church were not wholly blind to the real nature of the present struggle. However they might clamour for the sword, they perceived that it was a contest of intellect, not of brute force only; that appeals must be made to the reason of mankind; and that public opinion, which they had almost lost, must be recovered. Hitherto their literary champions had done them little credit. It was important that the cause should be better defended; that the arguments, which are always at hand for the support of every established system, and which are often sound, and which are always specious, should be pointed and brightened by the wit and eloquence of Erasmus.

— But as to the considerations which induced that writer at length to make war on a party with which he had so many principles in common, they may be resolved, even from his own declarations, into the least dignified and not the most honourable. He was terrified by a triple array of adversaries, who, for different reasons and by different methods, were plotting his destruction. He was terrified by the name of Lutheran, which some were endeavouring to fix upon him; he trembled at the bare suspicion of any secret understanding between the Reformer and himself. Again, he was irritated by some impatient taunts which he had sustained from some subalterns in the Lutheran camp; and while his vanity was offended on that side, it was abundantly flattered on the other by the solicitous overtures of the powerful, which in effect prevailed. Erasmus wanted that first essential of magnanimity, independence. Not any high motive

seems ever for a moment to have impelled him: to the highest of all—a deep, absorbing, religious conviction—he scarcely so much as pretended.* But even those nobler incentives to mere human virtue—the love of truth, the love of mankind, the lessons of a generous philosophy—seem to have had no share in influencing his determination. He did little more than weigh danger against danger, and loss against loss; and he decided according to the narrowness of his views, and the prevalence of his selfish hopes or fears.

Having at length, however, determined to throw his weight into the papal scale, he selected the ground of battle with his accustomed skill. He did not raise his voice in defence of any of the practical abuses of the church; he attempted no apology for the secular usurpations of the hierarchy—for the pride, the profligacy, the rapacity of the court of Rome. These perhaps might have been subjects more pleasing to his powerful patrons; but he was compromised by his former writings, and doubtless by his real feelings and principles, to refrain from them. Besides, those evils were now growing so unpopular that there would have been great risk of reputation in any attempt to shield them. Thus he left to Luther the undisputed possession of that field, and chose another more abstruse and intricate, and less accessible to vulgar understandings. A discussion on the unfathomable question of free will afforded ample space for metaphysical plausibility. And while it assumed on this occasion much of a theological character, it was

* His boast to Henry about dying in the support of Christianity may be contrasted with his far more deliberate confession to the Dean of St. Paul's. Besides, in speaking of a controversy with *Luther*, the expression was absolutely unmeaning.

connected so closely with the doctrine of justification by faith, as to involve the great religious principle on which the Reformation was founded.*

The positions which Erasmus endeavoured to establish in his *Diatribes*, so far as they can be discerned through the obscurity of a subject engendering many inconsistencies, were these:—That there is a power in the human will by which man can turn to things pertaining to his salvation, or avoid them; that though the work is for the most part accomplished by divine grace, yet some share is due to that power, as inviting grace into the soul, and co-operating with it when received; that this doctrine in no manner contradicts the necessity of faith, of entire love and devotion to God, of an absolute confidence, not in the merits of our own works, or in our own strength, but in Him and His promises. The arguments were for the most part levelled against two propositions which had been asserted by Luther: that free will had no force in respect to good; and that man had no liberty except for evil.

I shall altogether refrain from any mention of the reasonings adduced on either side, because a partial delineation of this controversy would tend only to mislead; and I have neither any space for a complete exposition of its merits, nor any inclination to pursue it into the inextricable mazes of necessity, contingency, the origin of evil, the eternal prescience of God. “Wicked

* “I exceedingly commend you,” says Luther in the conclusion of his reply, “for as much as you are the only one among all my adversaries who has attempted to handle the real subject in dispute. Nor have you fatigued me with extraneous matter about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such-like trifles, about which I have hitherto been hunted on all sides to no purpose. You, and only you, have seen the true hinge upon which all turned, and have aimed your blow at the throat.”—*De Servo Arbitrio*.

men," says Luther, "will always harbour wicked and blasphemous thoughts; but pious and good men will adore the divine economy, without scrutinising it too nicely, firmly persuaded that God only is just and wise, and never does wrong to any one; and that, whatever may be the appearances to us, there are always good reasons for what he does. We may not be able to comprehend *how* it is that he is just and merciful, though many perish and few are saved, nevertheless it is our duty to believe that he is so, and that he has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. God does not punish the wicked because he delights in the sufferings of the wretched, but because he has wise purposes in view which call for their punishment. The best of men are content with this account: they pretend not to explain all the difficulties that arise on the subject; they rather repress the struggles of pride and discontent, and exercise the graces of humility."

Even those most addicted to the doctrine of Erasmus were not satisfied with this work. They blamed its want of force and boldness; they considered it as the production of a mind acting with reluctance, more sensible of the dangers and difficulties of the subject than impressed with the truth of its positions, and steering so fearfully between opposite doctrines and opposite parties as to give no efficacy to its arguments, nor any confidence to the cause which it supported. By others it was considered as the work of a man who had read much, rather than thought profoundly; who knew the contents, rather than the spirit, of his Bible; who swept the surface of his subject, but went no deeper; who was equally far from establishing either his objections or his conclusions. However this may be, it certainly had the fate usual to compositions published under such circumstances: it offended the one faction without contenting the expectations of

the other; and it was finally admitted by the author himself, that in writing his *Diatribes* he had exceeded the legitimate limits of his powers.* Meanwhile it was almost entirely free from the habitual vice of polemical compositions, personal or party virulence, and affected the peaceful character of a conference or disquisition.

Luther thought fit to use unwonted deliberation in arguing so grave a subject against so renowned an antagonist. It was not till the close of the following year (1525) that he published, in reply, his book "*De Servo Arbitrio,—On the Bondage of the Will.*" In this long and very elaborate composition it was his object to show: That there is no freedom in the human will before the reception of faith, and that this faith is the gratuitous gift of God; that God has predestined from eternity on whom he shall bestow it, and to whom he shall refuse it; that He has thus elected some for salvation through Christ, others for reprobation; that in this election he has had no regard to the merits of men, but only to his own will. At the same time it should be observed that, while he thus advanced the extreme doctrine of absolute predestination, he never intended to disparage good works, but inculcated them as the natural and necessary fruits of faith. He never proposed to uproot the religious foundation of practical morality by teaching that God was in any sense indifferent to the actions of his creatures.

A more careful arrangement of his materials, more system in the conduct of his argument, a style more smooth and polished, attest the unusual labour bestowed

* "*Se cum Diatriben scriberet in sua arena non esse versatum,*" in a letter to Bishop Fisher. In another to Louis Vives, he said that while he was writing "*On Free Will,*" he had lost his own free will, and that his pen wrote one thing while his mind dictated another.—*Apud Seckend. lib. i. sect. 63, § 179.*

upon this treatise. His manner was warm and impassioned, for the subject was next to his heart; he believed that the truth was on his side, and that all depended on this truth—not only the stability of the Reformation, built on that basis, but what was even dearer to him, the salvation of his soul and of the souls of all mankind. Yet he permitted this ardour, sacred as was its source, to carry him beyond its just limits into angry and even calumnious invective, altogether unprovoked by the tone of his adversary.

The work was received with much avidity. Numerous editions were published at Wittenberg, Augsburg, and Nuremberg, and the rapidity of their circulation proved at least the interest excited by the controversy.* Then, as well as since that time, it was the subject of much difference between those who adopted its doctrine and those who rejected it. The former cited it as a marvel of close and vigorous reasoning, of force and eloquence and consistency. The others detected in it the seeds of immorality and impiety. They maintained that its positions were in their necessary consequences subversive of the responsibility of all human actions, and that they converted the God of mercy and justice into a capricious and arbitrary tyrant. Luther, for his part, was so far from intending any such inferences, so far from believing that though not intended they were true, that he continued to take peculiar pride in this composition; and he wrote, some years afterwards, to Wolfgang Capito, that among all his writings there was not one which he esteemed perfect (*justum*), except perhaps his *Bondage of the Will* and his *Catechism*.

Erasmus was irritated; and so little careful was he to

* "Among the Germans," says Erasmus to Louis Vives, December 27, 1524, "scarcely anything will sell except party writings, Lutheran and anti-Lutheran!"

dissemble the offence, or to set forth in his own conduct that calm temper and philosophical moderation which he loved to preach to the Reformers, that he instantly gave vent to his indignation in a little tract, composed in ten days,* called *Hyperaspistes† Diatribes*, the Defender of the *Diatribes*. Unquestionably there was much in Luther's personal treatment of his antagonist which might have wounded a vanity less sensitive than that of Erasmus. Ridicule, invective and contempt were discharged upon him, as the occasion might prompt, and in no measured terms; and the sort of praise and almost supercilious respect, not unsparingly mixed with them, did but increase the bitterness of the draught. But there was one accusation by which his wrath was most especially and most deservedly roused. Indulging in that utmost licence of controversy, which pretends to infer from general tone, or particular expressions, or dis-

* In the preface, dated Basle, February 20, 1526, he alleges as the reason for this impatience, that only that short space remained before the great fair at Francfort, at which it was essential that he should circulate some reply to the aspersions of Luther.

† "Did you ever read" (writes Melancthon to Camerarius) "a more bitter production than this of Erasmus? It is absolutely an asp." And in allusion to this pun, of which Melancthon shall have the credit, Luther writes to Spalatin (March 27, 1526): "Besides, that irritated viper, Erasmus, is again writing against me. What eloquence will that little vain-glorious creature exert in endeavouring to overthrow Luther!" Again, on October 8, 1527, after the publication of the second part of the *Hyperaspistes*, Luther writes to Stiefel: "*Erasmus viperinas duas Hyperaspistes seu Hyperaspides potius in me peperit, fere vipereas et supervipereas. . . .*" What Erasmus says (*adversus calumniosissiam epist. M. L.*) is this: "When all his book resounds with nothing else but Erasmus, Epicurus, Democritus, a sceptic, a detester of Christ, a derider of Christian piety, a corrupter of the Scriptures, a disseminator of evil, a drunkard; and when I did not thank him for these sweet compliments, but dared to refute his charges, suddenly I am transformed into a viper and a begetter of viper-asps. . . ."—No. 784 and 904.

puted consequences, the entire insincerity of an opponent, Luther had ventured to charge him with Epicurean opinions. The slander justified his resentment, and might have been turned to his profit; but by losing his dignity he lost his advantage. His hasty and bitter reply carried with it little conviction.

Still less credit did he gain by another attempt to which his anger impelled him. He wrote a letter of remonstrance to John, then Duke of Saxony, in which, after warmly complaining of the offensive imputation, he requested that some punishment, or at least some admonition, some mark of a prince's displeasure, might be administered to the calumniator.* And thus it proved, that he, whose counsels to the papal party so constantly prescribed a charitable forbearance from all forcible measures and all appeals to the secular arm, was no sooner himself engaged in the struggle, no sooner struck by the first shaft of controversial slander, than he had recourse to the temporal authority, and claimed its especial interference in his own defence. The demand, which the crown of Saxony had so frequently refused to popes and their nuncios, was not accorded to the querulous solicitation of Erasmus. Being at length embarked in the contest, and having made, in however mild a spirit, the first aggression, he was left, as was most fit, to avenge his wounds by the same sort of weapons which had inflicted them. He did so; and following up the first book of his *Hyperaspistes* by a second, published during the following year (1527), he endeavoured, by the bitterness of his sarcastic invectives, not perhaps so much to advance his own cause, as to emulate what he had so often stigmatised as the besetting vice of his antagonist.

This second part was, however, composed with great

* Seckendorf, lib. i., sect. 63, § 180, addit.

labour, and exhibited the utmost powers of the disputant. It was written too with less constraint than the Diatribe, because the party of the author was irrevocably decided; he had no longer to keep any terms or observe any delicacy towards Luther or his followers; he was even smarting under the lash, and impatient to repay the stripes; so that the course of his argument was enlivened by the frequent expression of his resentment, and there was a spirit of animation and earnestness in this composition which was wanting in the other. Some have asserted that he gained by it no less eminent a convert than Melancthon. It is certain that the latter was thenceforward extremely cautious in expressing his conviction or passing any decided judgment on the question in dispute; and also, that, in the subsequent editions of his "Common Places," those passages which had most explicitly laid down the doctrine of Luther, and to which reference was triumphantly made in the "Bondage of the Will," were altered or altogether erased. On the other hand, passages are cited from his Defence against Flavius and an Epistle to Calvin, both written many years afterwards, which prove him to have been at least far removed from Pelagianism. On a subject bordering on the inscrutable he may have thought at different times somewhat differently. And while his reason may have trembled at the imputed consequences of the extreme doctrine, his piety may have yielded to the Scriptural authority of Luther's argument, so as to leave in some indecision a mind less impetuous and single than that of Luther, less metaphysical and perhaps more religious than that of Erasmus.

But whatever may have been the subsequent opinion of Melancthon, there is certainly no ground to believe that Luther at any time retracted or modified his own: and as there were many of his disciples, whose faith

could not carry them to support him in the utter annihilation of freewill, yet who revered his authority too much to revolt against his decrees, it was attempted to reconcile the opposite doctrines and to explain away the differences. But this was soon found impossible; the principles were too obviously at variance. And thus at length, in the year 1580, certain Lutheran doctors, under the guidance of Hegidius Hunnius, a professor at Wittemberg, not disputing that an absolute predestination and entire dependence of the will was the doctrine of their founder, yet themselves dissenting from it, introduced into the Lutheran church the more moderate opinions which prevail there to this day.*

From this time forwards Erasmus pursued the Reformers, as a body, so fiercely as to make it doubtful whether he did not detest them more even than his original enemies, the monks. Yet he was in this respect unfortunate, and, since he sought the good opinion of others rather than his own, especially so, that he did not escape from the vituperations of the one party by vituperating the other; nor did the abuse now heaped upon him by the Lutherans recommend him to the favour, or even to the mercy, of the opposite extreme of the theological world. Nay, so unmitigated was the virulence of his old antagonists that he did not disdain, in 1527, to supplicate the imperial protection against them.† His bitterness

* Beaus. Hist. Ref., lib. vi. p. 259.

† His letter to Charles, from Basle, Sept. 2, 1527, is extant. He began it by boasting of the efficacy of his services against the Lutherans, and the storms and perils then excited against him. "But now," he continued, "since the Lutheran faction has begun to decline and that in some measure through my exertions and my risks, others under the pretence of religion rise up against me," &c. Charles replied, on Dec. 13, from Bruges with much civility, expressing pleasure at the intelligence that the Lutheran madness was declining, and ascribing to Erasmus alone that triumph, which neither emperors, pontiffs, princes, nor universities

against the Reformers he presently began to vent in expressions such as these : " This new gospel produces us here a new race of men—harsh, impudent, false, slanderers, liars, sycophants, quarrelling with each other, courteous to none, to all uncourteous, seditious, furious, brawlers—men to me so hateful, that if I knew any city that was free from their race, thither would I emigrate."*

Again : " I hate these Gospellers—as for many reasons, so particularly for this, that through them literature declines every hour, and is on the point of perishing—and without letters, what is life ? They love money and a wife, and care not a straw for anything else. We have been stunned long enough with the cry of Gospel, Gospel, Gospel ; we want Gospel-morals." Sometimes he triumphed in the internal dissensions of the Reformers and predicted their speedy dissolution. Sometimes he gloried in the accomplishment of his own prophecies ; and on one occasion taunted Luther himself with recantation and

had been able to achieve ! The two present a good specimen both of the blindness of Erasmus' vanity, and of the food by which it was nourished. In a letter to George of Saxony written in the same year he predicted the easy dissolution of the faction through its internal dissensions and corrupt morals.

* " Hic nobis hoc novum Evangelium gignit novum hominum genus, præfractos, impudentes, fucatos, maledicos, mendaces, sycophantas, inter se discordes, nulli commodos, omnibus incommodos, seditiosos, furiosos, rabulas, qui mihi adeo displicent, ut siquam nossem civitatem, ab hoc genere liberam, eo demigrarem." There is a letter from him to George of Saxony of Sept. 4, 1524, in which he says " My desire was that the Pharisaic tyranny should be abolished, not changed. But if we must be slaves, let us rather serve the pontiffs and bishops, indifferent as they are, than those shabby, sordid Phalarides, more insufferable than all the rest together. . . " Nay, even to Melancthon (Sept. 6, 1524) he wrote : " Formerly the gospel made men civilised, and liberal, and peaceful, and of friendly speech, expelling the opposite vices ; these fellows are become furious ; they defraud their neighbours ; they raise tumults everywhere ; they slander men of merit ; they are new hypocrites, new tyrants, without a grain of Evangelical spirit within them. . . "

apostacy. But the most deliberate and offensive of his attacks was in the form of a letter to one Vulturius Neocomus, a Reformer, and in better times his friend. He called it an "Epistle against certain persons falsely calling themselves Evangelical;" and he published it (Nov. 4, 1529) at the moment when the Emperor was about to pass from Italy into his German dominions, to restore the peace of the church.

Before we notice the particular object of this composition, let us record some of the expressions in which the author characterised the opposite party :

"Look around among the Evangelical folks, and see whether they are less luxurious, libidinous, avaricious than those whom you denounce. Bring me a single instance of any one whom that gospel of yours has reformed from intemperance to sobriety, from brutality to courteousness, from rapacity to liberality, from evil speaking to speaking well of others, from shamelessness to modesty. I will show you many who are deteriorated through it. They have cast out the statues from the churches. But to what end is that, if the idols of their vices are still just as much worshipped in their hearts? . . . In their assemblies, who ever beheld any one pouring forth tears for his sins, beating his bosom, venting groans? They have abolished confession : meanwhile most of them do not so much as confess to their God. They have done away with fasts and distinctions of meats : meanwhile they indulge in heavy gluttony ; and some have got so far away from Judaism, as to become Epicureans. . . . Nay they say that the race is detestable even to the Turkish Sultan, who accuses its propensity to sedition."

Again: "Let us examine that Evangelical connexion ; how many adulterers it contains, how many drunkards, how many gamblers, how many bankrupts, how many stained with other infamous vices ! And yet so far are

they from avoiding such men, that they take pleasure and delight in them.* And while they love no one except themselves ; while they are obedient neither to God, nor bishop, nor princes, nor authorities ; while they are slaves to avarice, to sensuality, to gluttony, to lust, they demand to be esteemed Evangelical and say that Luther is their master. But with what front can those acknowledge Luther, who are conspicuous for their neglect of the very duties, which are especially taught and inculcated by Luther! . . .”

In this effusion of party bitterness there are some assertions bearing so undisguisedly the impress of slander, as to require no observation. And had such been the only purpose of the composition, it would scarcely have deserved the notice already bestowed on it. As the earlier writings of Erasmus contained much that was favourable to the cause, the Reformers were now wont to select certain passages from his works and publish them. Among other matters a principle was imputed to him, and the imputation justified by such quotations, which the others were well pleased to assert, at Spires, on his authority. It was this : That heretics could not rightfully be punished with death. Erasmus was extremely offended by the charge. He even designated it as an atrocious assertion. He declaimed against the unfairness of producing partial extracts from his writings without the explanatory context. He disavowed the “seditious” principle (so he now called it) ; he declared that he had never at any time maintained it. He confessed indeed that he had exhorted the princes to use the sword with discretion, and not to destroy their subjects for every trifling differ-

* “ Atque populus tam Evangelicus etiam Turarum Principi dicitur esse detestabilis, quem aut seditionem tantum Nunc circumspecte mihi sollicitum vult Evangelicum, qui habet adulteros, qui adulteros, quot adulteros, qui dissipatos, qui sine omni ratione. Et hos quidem vult debere in debita, necesse debet ut vivat.”

ence and on every light complaint ; but he had never disputed their right, nor the duty which, on certain occasions, required them to exercise it.

“ I have nowhere asserted that punishment is not to be inflicted upon heretics, nor in any passage do I deprive the princes of that right of the sword, which is left them by Christ and the Apostles. Only I admonish them in some few places not to be precipitate in their severity, nor to listen readily to the ravings of certain monks and theologians. . . There is one kind of heresy, which teaches manifest blasphemy ; as that which deprives Christ of his divine nature, that which indirectly charges the Holy Scriptures with falsehood. There is another, which seeks wealth and advancement by tumult and sedition. Shall we in these cases tie up the sword of the prince ? Even were it unlawful to put heretics to death, yet certainly, in respect to blasphemers and seditious persons, it is not only lawful, but necessary for the safety of the republic. Wherefore, as those are wrong on the one hand, who would cast men into the fire for every trifling error, so are those on the other, who hold that the civil magistrate has no right of capital punishment over any heretics . . . that severity, which they call cruelty, is essentially necessary to governments.”

In asserting the most detestable principle of his age and church, Erasmus did not sufficiently consider how easily it might have been applied to himself. In the judgment of those merciless bigots, whose vices he had exposed and lashed with such honest severity, there was not any man who deserved the penal faggot more entirely than Erasmus*—not any man, Luther himself not

* There is a letter from Erasmus to one John de Hondt, a canon and a high papist, dated Easter, 1524, to this effect : Erasmus had learnt that the canon had described his books as more pernicious than those of Luther, and declared that they ought all to be burnt and the author along

excepted, whose execution they would have witnessed with greater exultation, or justified by more conclusive arguments. It was no excuse that he had guarded the princes against rash or partial severity—his own offences were of the gravest character, of the deepest dye, and they had been reiterated with seditious contumacity in many and various writings, through a long succession of years—doubtless they deserved no lighter penalty than death!

The moment which Erasmus chose to come forward in public defence of that principle proves indeed how deep was his ill-will against the Protestant party. Charles was descending from the Alps with professions of peace—to restore the blessings of concord, to allay the horrors of religious strife, to devise means of reconciliation and love. At such a crisis to suggest the sword, to remind him of his right, of his duty, to exterminate, would have been cruel in a cardinal or an inquisitor; but in the mild and moderate Erasmus, the peaceful mediator, the foe of all violence, the veteran advocate of mercy, it betokened the last delirium of selfish and revengeful malice.

The evangelical ministers of Strasburg published an answer to this letter, and Erasmus again replied in the form of an "Address to the Brethren of Lower Germany and Friesland." The greater part of this tract is occupied in self-defence, and the abuse of the Evangelicals is less reckless, unmeasured and indiscriminate than in

with them. "You must be ignorant," says Erasmus, "what a mass of evils I am suffering here from the Lutherans! Death is more endurable than my afflictions; and had I known the state of this conspiracy I would rather have migrated to the Turks than hither. Not thus did Pope Adrian judge my writings, who silenced the theologians brawling against me; not thus the cardinals; not thus Campeggio; not thus the Lutherans themselves, who clamour against no one more loudly than against me."

the former work; but in the conclusion, the crime of religious dissent is proclaimed in expressions which no Dominican could have surpassed: "There is no worse vice than heresy or schism. Let luxury, lewdness, ambition, avarice and every other denomination of crime be all heaped together in the person of one single priest, yet heresy alone is more vicious than all this pool of vices put together.* In all ages there have been many complaints, as well against priests and princes, as against the morals of the people. In our anger against ecclesiastics let us not forget that they are but men. Intolerable practices will be corrected by the authority of princes much more efficaciously than by inexperienced upstarts, who exasperate the evils by the bad methods which they employ to remove them. Let the reform be made through the medium of Charles V., an Emperor eminent for his power, eminent for his clemency, and equally eminent for his religion. The co-operation of the German princes is assured to him, and there is much hope that the thoughts of the Pope are turned in the same direction. No reformation of the church will succeed unless it originate with our rulers." Was this flattery, or was it the ignorant expression of a vain and foolish aspiration?

In the letter to Vulturius, Erasmus rather happily compared the office of Melancthon pursuing the steps

* "*Nullum enim est vitium hæresi aut schismate deterius. Congerantur in unum sacerdotem luxus, libido, ambitio, avaritia, et si quid præterea criminum est, totam hanc vitiorum lernam una superat hæresis.*" This was written from Friburg on August 1, 1530, while the Diet of Augsburg was sitting, under the direction of the Emperor. In 1519 he wrote: "*Optima Christianismi pars est vita Christo digna; quæ cum suppetit, non debet ipse facilis hæresos suspicio.*" But in the interval he had returned from his truancy to a faithful filial devotion to the apostolical church.

of Luther to that of Lite following Ate, and repairing the mischief inflicted by her hands.* He treated Melancthon with invariable respect and every show of affection. Indeed the latter, from the moment that he rose into notice, was considered by the enemy as the least exceptionable among all the reformers, and his name was not unhonoured even at the court of Rome. His purely literary tastes and the moderation of his temper favourably distinguished him from the more stubborn polemics of his party. Thus Erasmus maintained a friendly correspondence with him; and on the publication of his *Diatribæ* addressed to him a long letter of compliment and conciliation. It was dated on September 6, 1524.

“If Wittemberg were not so far distant, I should not hesitate to go and pass a few days there, to converse with Luther and you. But I am deterred from writing by the publication of my first letter to Luther, which brought me into some danger. . . . I have read through all your *Commonplaces*, in which I discover your peculiar genius, no less candid than happy, which I have ever looked up to and loved; but this with greater reason since I have read this work; though I have some few objections to offer, could I do so by word of mouth. I perceive a host of dogmas well arrayed against the Pharisaic

* A more faithful representation is that of Luther himself, who in his preface to Melancthon's *Exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians* writes as follows: “I have always greater pleasure in seeing Melancthon's books, whether in Latin or German, exposed for sale than my own. I am born to this—to war and battle with troops of devils, so that my books are stormy and warlike. I have to break the clods and root out the stocks, to hew away thorns and bushes, to fill up the pools; I am the rough forester and have to break and lay down the road. But Philip travels delicately and quietly along it, builds and plants, sows and waters with pleasure, since God has richly endowed him with his gifts.”

tyranny, yet among these are there some, &c. &c.” Then, after treating some other matters in the same temper, with the same balanced expressions, he proceeded to what may perhaps have been the secret object of the whole: “Cardinal Campeggio, a man of most singular humanity, has sent a messenger to treat with me about many matters, and among the rest about removing you to some other place. I replied, that I wished such genius as yours to be set free from these hateful contentions, but that I despaired of your recantation. I pour this secret into your bosom, my dear Philip, relying on your honour. You will take care that it be not divulged among the wicked ones.”*

In his answer, on the 30th of the October following, Melancthon praised the general† temper in which the Diatribe was composed, and added a promise from Luther that he would reply with the same moderation: “My knowledge of the goodwill of Luther towards you confirms me in that hope. . . . You may safely deposit with me whatsoever you may write to me. I would rather lay down my life than break my faith.”

Erasmus replied, on the 10th of December, with considerable address, and doubtless with the scarcely-veiled

* “Misit ad me Campeggio Cardinalis vi profecto singulari humanitate, qui mecum ageret de multis et inter cætera de te alio quopiam evocando. Respondi, me optare tuum istum ingenium esse liberum ab istis contentionibus, sed desperare te suscepturum palinodiam. Hæc tuo fretus ingenio effudi in sinum tuum, mi Philippe. Tui candoris erit curare, ne spargantur ad improbos.”

† “Tametsi alicubi nigrum salem adsperseris. Verum non est tam irritabilis Lutherus, ut devorare nihil possit. . . . Apud me tuto deponas quicquid ad me scripseris. Malim enim emori quam fidem fallere. . . .” The letter ends with the expression of a wish that Erasmus would translate the ἀντιπóλους Λογοῦς of Demosthenes and Æschines—a compliment which is courteously returned in the reply.

motive of alienating his correspondent from the friendship of Luther: "What Luther's spirit may dictate to him is his own concern. You I have not exhorted to recantation with any vehemence, only for this reason, because I knew that I should lose my pains. I am not the judge of another's conscience, nor the master of another's faith. Certainly I could wish that your talents, which are born for literature, might be perpetually dedicated to literature. There would be no lack of actors in that tragedy, nor is it quite clear what will be its catastrophe." Then, after retailing his own dreams about a gradual, peaceful, pontifical reformation, and urging against Luther the abuses to which his doctrine had been turned, and censuring his too undisguised proclamation of the truth, and praising the more discreet *Œcolampadius*, he proceeded:—

"But it may be that the morals of this generation have deserved so merciless a physician, a man to treat our diseases with the knife and with cautery. . . . Of the sincerity of your mind I have no sort of doubt; proceed sedulously with the work you have undertaken; but there is much to lead me to question that of Luther. His is a burning and a vehement spirit, the soul of *Pelides*, who knows not how to yield. . . . Nor had I any other object in my hesitation, or moderation, as you may be best pleased to call it, than the interest of both parties. I hate sedition: from cruelty I have ever and constantly dissuaded the princes. . . . I do not question your honour, often as I have been deceived by those to whom I would have trusted ten lives. But whatever is committed to paper is sure to be published, either through the perfidy of the bearers, or through some other chance. If I could only converse with you, I could pour out much more into your bosom. As it is, it is my chief wish that

the Gospel may be religiously observed and loved among you. About myself I am not very solicitous . . .”

I find no further allusion to this delicate subject.* There is a letter from Melancthon to Erasmus, of March 23, 1528, written with cold respectful courtesy, and accounting for a long interruption in his correspondence; and this was confined, indeed, to very rare communications, from the time that the latter dipped his pen in gall, and engaged in open warfare with the evangelical party.

There were some qualities common to these two scholars, which led Erasmus to imagine perhaps that he might successfully tamper with the principles of the other. That he believed the sincerity of Melancthon, while he questioned that of Luther, is an improbable assertion, falsified by the very advances he was now making to sound at least, if not to tempt, the integrity of the one, and which he would not have dared so much as to breathe towards Luther. But he had mistaken mildness of temper for weakness of principle; and having observed, besides, in the Greek professor and layman a stronger inclination to profane learning and a less exclusive devotion to religious pursuits, than in the doctor and preacher of divinity, he hoped that he might be seduced away from the turbulent scene, for which

* The office of mediator seems to have been deputed to Faber. After Melancthon had published his “*Libellus Visitationis Saxonicæ*,” he received, as he relates to Camerarius, overtures from that divine: “Faber writes to me from Bohemia and exhorts me to desert the cause, promising me some place at the court of Ferdinand as the reward of my apostacy. He thinks that I am wavering, because I have written with some moderation in that book, though, as you know, I have written nothing but what Luther has taught commonly. Yet, because I write without verbal asperity, these very acute men imagine that I dissent from Luther.”—Ap. Scultet., ann. 1527.

certainly he was not altogether formed, and relegated to the peaceful fields of literary meditation. But in two respects he had calculated the character of Melancthon by his own, and in those he was most mistaken. Melancthon was poor, and delivered his lectures with zealous industry to crowds of scholars for a very inconsiderable salary. But he had no thirst for money; he had no hankering after the emoluments, or even after the dignities, of this world; he had no secret cravings for the notice of princes or the adulations of the great. There is no act in his life, there is no sentence in his voluminous and confidential correspondence, which betrays any working of that restless anxiety after little vanities and little gains so constantly conspicuous in Erasmus;* and in as far as his spirit was removed above such considerations, it was misunderstood and undervalued by the other.

Besides, the study of their writings assures us, that religious considerations had a stronger influence on the actions of Melancthon than on those of Erasmus. The latter was doubtless sincere in his belief, as a matter of opinion; and his works abound with holy sentiments, in the contemplative philosophical tone of a Christian philanthropist.† Still, on a closer examination of his senti-

* When he published his *Freewill* the reformers called him a Balaam. "Me passim appellant Balaam, quod Adrianus pontifex invitavit me ut mitterem consilium. Misi partem, sed displicuit. Obtulit decanatum; simpliciter recusavi. Voluit mittere pecuniam; rescripsi ne mitteret obolum. Sic sum Balaamus . . ." So he wrote to Melancthon. Elsewhere he declared that a bishopric was at his service, if he would write against Luther. No doubt he was above accepting an open bribe. But I find in one of his epistles the following singular remark respecting one Hankel, who was related to have refused the mitre: "Quod episcopopen recuset, non dubito quin illi constet ratio; tamen, ut nunc resunt mortalium, præstat esse subulcum quam suum."

† "Ego, mi Dorpi," wrote Erasmus, early in life, "neminem contemno, nisi meipsum. For my part, I despise no one, except myself."

ments, as painted in his epistles and represented in his life, it is clear at least that a strong sense of his Christian duties and responsibilities was not the ruling principle of his conduct. His religion resided in his understanding, and frequently warmed and excited it to eloquent expressions of piety, and a dignified and lofty view of evangelical morality; but it had little dominion over his feelings. It had no possession of his heart; it never exalted him to any disinterested action; it could never have moved him to any serious sacrifice; it animated his speculations, it did not guide his life. It was not thus with Melancthon, whose faith, if less burning and impetuous than that of Luther, was ever awake and active in his bosom, not lighting only, but warming and raising up an immoveable mark for his guidance, in all that he did or meditated: and thus that very cautiousness, bordering sometimes on timidity, in which he seemed most to resemble Erasmus, sprang from a different state of mind. In the one, it proceeded from the fear of this world—from a calculation of the probable acts, speeches, or opinions of men; in the other, from the fear of God, and a scrupulous solicitude about the means best suited to promote His glory, and the final well-being of His creatures.

Such were they; yet is it hard to say how much of this distinction may be ascribed to circumstances. In their natures there was much similarity. Could they have changed positions, each might have acted the other's part. Could Erasmus have been placed at an early age under the impassioned influence of a Luther, he might have followed much the same course which Melancthon followed; and the latter, freed from the perpetual trammels of theological controversy, might have been as easy, as elegant, as favoured by the rich and powerful, and as fond of such favour, as Erasmus.

Respecting Luther, Erasmus doubtless expressed a sincere opinion when he said, "I am astonished to find in Luther two perfectly different persons. Sometimes he so writes that the very soul of the apostles seems to breathe within him; but then again, when he takes to his jeers and gibes and scoffs and jests, what buffoon is there to be compared with him? Again, with what magnanimity does he look down upon emperors and pontiffs! and then, roused by the slightest whisper of the most insignificant and abject of mankind, he assails some poor individual with such fury, as if he had forgotten the drama in which he is engaged and the part which he has undertaken."

There is much truth in this; yet it should be observed that, by such a mind as that of Erasmus, the fervid earnestness of Luther might often be mistaken for violence, and the generous expressions of a disinterested indignation attributed to party or personal malice. To those, the multitude of mankind, whose feelings are seldom busy except about themselves, whom nothing can rouse to warmth, unless it be connected with their own vanity, objects, or interests, the emotions of a nobler spirit, deeply affected by the conviction of some general truth, or the spectacle of some wickedness or baseness, and vehemently expressing that affection, are commonly an inexplicable phenomenon; and so they are resolved into private pique or petty jealousy, according to the stinted measure of ordinary character, and the vulgar envious practice of ascribing to low passions or selfish calculations that which is really great in the actions of man.

Having thus exposed, without any reserve, the defects, which are indeed but too visible, in the character of Erasmus, I must protect him from one very serious charge. Many theologians of all churches, Roman Catholic, reformed and English, from Luther down to

Milner,* have questioned the sincerity of his religious profession, and even accused him of absolute infidelity. In reply to Luther's taunts, he thought it necessary, in the first book of his 'Hyperaspistes,' to make the most solemn imaginable declaration of his entire and perfect belief in Providence and revelation, which in other places he has repeated.† In my opinion there is no plausible reason for doubting it. It is easy, and perhaps not very uncommon, for controversialists and zealots, passionately convinced of the truth of their own peculiar opinions, to regard as empty or insincere anything that

* Vol. v. chap. xii.

† His tract, "Adversus Calumniosissimam Epistolam M. L.," was written expressly to repel this charge. "En recanduit in me," he begins, "præter expectatum M. Lutheri θυμὸς ἀγῆνυρ. Edixit enim epistolam quæ tota spirat parricidiale quoddam odium. . . . I would, that by the sacrifice of this wretched body I could lull the dissensions of the church; how willingly and gladly would I submit to that death!—Meanwhile I entreat from the Lord the pardon of my sins by nightly and daily prayers; and as to faith, I beseech him, not to give it to me, but to confirm and augment what he has already given. I say this sincerely, and before the Lord: let him take instant vengeance on me if it be not entirely true. But I can never believe that Luther does really entertain of me that suspicion which he endeavours to instil into others. . . ." In a letter to Luther from Basle, April 11, 1526, after complaining of "the scurrilous calumnies, the criminal falsehoods of the other—that I am an Atheist, an Epicurean, sceptical in my Christian profession, a blasphemer, and what not,"—he continues, "I care the less about all this, because my conscience is sound in these matters. Unless my sentiments concerning God and the divine writings were those of a Christian, I would not desire that my life should be prolonged even till tomorrow. . . ." Luther persisted in the taunt notwithstanding. On March 7, 1529, he wrote to Link: "Judicet Christus hunc ἀθεον Lucianumque Epicurum." And on May 28, of the same year, to James Montanus: "Homo est enim levissimus, qui religiones omnes plane ridet, more sui Luciani, nec serio aliquid scribit, nisi cum vindictas et noxia scribit." Compare this calumny with the first letters from Luther to Erasmus, breathing the very soul of humility and veneration.


may fall short of that impetuous assurance, and to represent as no better than sceptics men who differ from them on any important dogma, or even inculcate the same dogma less imperatively; but in this they are guilty of unintentional injustice. It is one thing to hesitate concerning the truth of Scripture, and another to be perplexed about its interpretation. That which they call scepticism is sometimes no more than a modest distrust in the power of the human understanding; and the question may really be, not whether the Bible be the Word of God, but whether certain senses be properly affixed to certain passages contained in it. Such, as far as I can judge, was the scepticism of Erasmus. He had difficulties in reconciling some seeming inconsistencies, and in explaining some particular texts. He sought his knowledge only in his reason; yet even in his reason he placed no unbounded confidence; and thus he continued, even in his latter years (and this very disposition has been alleged as a proof of his insincerity), to seek instruction, and to profess his willingness to be led by stronger arguments to more correct convictions.

The peroration of his *Diatrise* will illustrate these remarks:—"I do not assume in this matter the character of a judge, but of a disputant; yet I can with truth affirm, that I have observed in my disputation that religious impartiality to which judges in former days were sworn. Nor shall I feel either shame or reluctance, though now in my old age, to receive instruction from a young man, if any one shall bring forward with evangelical mildness more evident truths. I well know that I shall here be told: 'Let Erasmus learn Christ, and dismiss his human prudence; no man understands these things but he who has the spirit of God.' If I do not yet understand what Christ is, I must indeed thus far

have widely missed my mark ; yet I should be glad to learn what is the spirit, which has guided so many Christian doctors and people (for the people probably agreed with their bishops) persisting for thirteen hundred years in this same non-understanding."

It was this self-distrusting temper which bound him to the established ecclesiastical authority. Through the same sense of his own doubts and difficulties he was willing to acquiesce, so far as interpretation was concerned, in the final judgment of the church. He would have amended its morality and enlightened its ignorance, but he would have preserved its power. He foresaw the discords which must arise otherwise ; he perceived to how many different and conflicting conclusions the free use and abuse of mere reason, as applied to the explanation of Scripture, must ever lead even honest and intelligent men ; and he was aware besides, that those overruling impressions, or experiences, which may sometimes strengthen, but which sometimes supersede, reason, would convince none, except those upon whom Heaven should vouchsafe to bestow them—so that religious unanimity was not to be expected from either source, but rather a sort of doctrinal anarchy would spring from the ruins of the existing despotism. Thus he chose, as he thought, the lesser evil, when he rejected the newly-asserted claims of private judgment, and kept religious opinion, or, as it was now called, conscience, still subject to the spiritual yoke of Rome.

By these remarks I only wish to show, that the expressed scruples and perplexities of Erasmus were consistent with a sincere belief in the truth of the religion, though in his calmer temperament it awakened none of those impetuous emotions which are the most conspicuous signs of faith, which give birth to acts of devotion



and enthusiasm, and shed over the whole life the colour of holiness.*

* The following was his own opinion of himself, written at Basle not long before his death :—" Ingenium simplex, abhorrens a mendacio. . . Linguae inter amicos liberioris, nonnunquam plus quam sat esset. Sæpe falsus, amicis tamen diffidere non poterat. Nec putidulus erat, neque quicquam unquam scripsit quod ipsi placeret. Ac ne facie quidem propria delectabatur, vixque extortum est amicorum precibus, ut se pingi pateretur. Dignitatum ac divitiarum perpetuus contemptor fuit, neque quicquam prius otio et libertate habuit. Candidus alienæ doctrinæ æstimator. In provehendis bonis literis nemo magis profecit, gravemque ob hanc rem invidiam sustinuit a barbaris et monachis. Usque ad annum quinquagesimum nec impetiit quenquam nec impetitus est a quoquam, stylo. Idque habebat sibi propositum omnino stylum incruentum servare. A Fabro primum est impetitus, nam Dorpiana visa suppressa sunt. In respondendo semper civilis erat. Lutherana tragœdia intolerabili illum oneravit invidia. Discerptus est ab utraque parte, dum utrique studet consulere.—*Finis.*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

VARIOUS POLITICAL MOVEMENTS—FIRST DIET OF SPIRES.

Anti-Lutheran policy of the principal powers in Europe, and various treaties among them—broad division of the two parties—strength of the Evangelical party—their closer union and alliance—conference of Salfield—doctrine of justification—the imperial cities—conduct of the papists—Diet of Augsburg in 1526—defence of the Reformation by Melancthon—the substance of his reasonings—another document chiefly respecting the property of the church—the first Diet of Spires—previous treaties of alliances—dictation of the Emperor—firmness of the Reformers, especially the imperial cities, and entire success—the progress of the Turks influences the Archduke Ferdinand—sketch of the great political transactions of that period—battle of Pavia—captivity of Francis—treaty of Madrid—violation of that by Francis, authorised by the Pope—the Holy League—Charles sincerely anti-Lutheran—Charles's letter to the Pope—to the Cardinals—both ineffectual—sacking of Rome by the imperialists, and captivity of Clement—Ferdinand raised to the throne of Hungary and Bohemia—consequent change in his policy—treaty of Cambray between Charles and Francis—visit of Charles to Italy, and interview with the Pope at Bologna—the real and supposed treaty among the papal chiefs revealed to the Reformers by Otho Pack—conduct of the Elector and Landgrave—fate of Pack—policy recommended by the divines of Wittemberg.

IMMEDIATELY after the battle of Pavia (Feb. 24, 1526), in which Francis I. became the prisoner of his rival, the Pope transferred his friendship to the conqueror, and entered into close alliance with the Emperor, the King of England, and Archduke Ferdinand. The ninth article of the treaty then concluded was to the following effect: That the contracting parties should unite all their forces and march in arms against the disturbers of the *Catholic religion* and the insulters of the Pope,

and avenge every outrage committed against the See of Rome, as if it had been committed against themselves. In all the negotiations of the great powers during this period the same spirit is apparent. In a treaty concluded between Henry VIII. of England and Louise, the mother of Francis and Regent of France during his captivity, a clause was inserted to the same purpose; and a similar stipulation was contained in the treaty of Madrid, between Charles and Francis, by which the latter was restored to liberty.

Thus far the policy of the Vatican was triumphant. The three most powerful princes of Europe were associated with the Pope, or with each other, in one common object—which was the only object they had in common,—that of extirpating the Lutheran heresy. And as it was not unreasonable in the Pope to rest his hopes of victory in the arms of princes, and his greatest hopes in those of the greatest princes, so was it very natural that the latter, who saw the Reformation from a distance, and, being for the most part unacquainted with its real principles, were readily brought to believe that the late seditions had originated there, should engage in this confederacy. We need not question the sincerity of any one of them in this purpose; and, doubtless, they would have pursued it with unanimous zeal, had not other interests and other passions interposed to prevent their concord.

The same, under existing circumstances, was the best policy of the Pope. It was too late to concede; the time for amusing the discontented with the shadow of a reformation was passed by. A contest of principles had commenced. The principles of spiritual independence had gained such strong ground, as to secure a certain degree of success; and had they been opposed by no more substantial arms than sophistry, prejudice and calumny, they might have spread into

every province of Christendom. Luther knew this truth even better than Clement; and thus, while the one was endeavouring to commit the difference to the sword, the other was equally solicitous to leave it entirely to the arbitration of reason. Both judged rightly; and as far as the policy of either prevailed so far was it successful. The most despotic kingdoms preserved for the present their allegiance to Rome; but the principles of the Reformation were triumphantly diffused, wherever there was free access to the people, and the spots in which they took their firmest root were the imperial cities of Germany.

Meanwhile, the fruits of the policy of Clement and the intrigues of Campeggio now became visible. The League of Eslingen had set the example of a political division of the religious disputants. The parties thenceforward became more and more declared. The sovereigns began to act more, the people less; and the foundation of the future division, into Catholic and Protestant states, may be discerned in the occurrences of that early period. For no inconsiderable portion even of the princes of Germany now declared with more or less confidence in favour of the new principles. The chief of these was John, Elector of Saxony, the successor of Frederick, who, with the same views, possessed the integrity and firmness, without the political wisdom and foresight, of his brother. A younger and equally honest and more energetic confederate was Philip, Landgrave of Hesse—for it was at this time that he avowed his adherence to the cause, for which he seems long to have nourished a secret affection. These two leaders were supported by the Archduke of Prussia, by George and Casimir,* Margraves of Brandenburg, by the Elector

* Casimir wrote to his brothers George and John, to mention the
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Palatine, by the Dukes of Lunenburg, Pomerania and Mecklenburg, by the Princes of Anhalt and Henneberg. And though the ancient practices were not yet officially abolished in all these states, they were so generally condemned by the voice of the people, that, their defence being abandoned by the rulers of the people, they were ripe for immediate removal.

These princes now began to draw more closely together, through the motive, not only of common principles, but of a common danger. Conferences took place at Salfeld and at Coburg; and at the former, in the summer of 1525, a resolution was agreed upon: "That the parties would use their utmost exertions to advance the glory of God, and to maintain a doctrine in conformity with his word—rendering thanks to Him for having revived in their time the true doctrine of justification by faith, which had been long buried under a mass of superstitions; and that they would not permit the extinction of the truth, which God had so lately revealed to them." This is remarkable on two accounts—first, as being the earliest declaration of any league among the political chiefs of the Reformation; next, as resting its plea, not on political grounds, nor on any great moral or social principle, not even on the abuses or exactions of the Roman church and the necessity of repressing them, not on ceremonies or any question of externals, but on the very basis, which Luther

desire of their common subjects for the preaching of the Gospel, for the abolition of various forms and ceremonies and for changes in several others, such or nearly such as had been introduced by Luther at Wittemberg. George gave his full consent. But John, who wrote from Toledo, and was breathing the air of Spain, expressed his opinion with cautious ambiguity. Matters, therefore, did not advance rapidly. But the two Reformers put themselves in friendly communication with John of Saxony. The particulars may be found in Marheinecke, t. ii. p. 160—167.

so constantly asserted to be that of his whole work—the scriptural doctrine of justification. The princes may have been honest in this declaration—they may really have set the importance, which they professed to set, on that great question. Or, if this were not so, they must have pretended to so much piety, out of respect to the convictions of their subjects. In either case, it is clear that multitudes were impressed with the views and animated with the spirit of Luther, and that the essential dogma of the religion was then very commonly considered as the corner-stone of the Reformation.

The imperial cities held about the same time an assembly at Ulm, for the same purpose. And these defensive measures were fully justified by the previous movements of the papal party. Of its chiefs, whether secular or ecclesiastical, there were many who sincerely ascribed the late insurrections to the principles of Luther; there were doubtless others who, though better instructed, dishonestly joined in the cry. All were elated by the overthrow of the insurgents; and they now imagined nothing less, than to pursue their triumph to the discomfiture of the spiritual rebels, and the entire extirpation of the heresy. It was the perpetual cry of the papists, that the principles of religious independence, or Christian liberty, now broached, must inevitably lead to civil insubordination. And thus they showed the same desire in this, as in earlier ages of the church, to confound the crimes, and to inflict upon the former, wheresoever they had the power, the penalties which were properly due to the latter. So that, if the Reformers did sometimes, through ignorance or passion, overstep the limits of their genuine principles, their enemies were always eager, as a part of their wisdom and policy, to visit the two offences with indiscriminate vengeance.

Meanwhile, Charles issued from Toledo an edict, for the convocation of a Diet at Augsburg, which spoke very clearly the language of the Vatican. He demanded the execution of the Edict of Worms, and the forcible destruction of the Lutherans. The immediate effect of this was to draw still closer the bonds which united that party. On the pressing solicitation of the Landgrave, an interview took place, (on the 7th of November, 1525,) between himself and the son of the Elector, at which the basis of a general alliance, among all the reformed or reforming states and cities, was established.

Further measures were arranged for resistance to any violence which might be proposed at the approaching Diet. And those two princes instructed their ministers to remonstrate against the harshness of the imperial Edict, to point out the great calamities with which it threatened the German republic, to recommend an adhesion to the decree of Nuremberg, and to insist on the impossibility of enforcing that of Worms. The Diet assembled in November: very few members were present, either in person or by deputy, and not any ecclesiastical lord except the bishop of Trent. Accordingly the moderate party prevailed; and the Recess, which was published on Jan. 9, 1526, was composed, for the most part, in the spirit of those instructions. The Emperor was urged besides to hasten the convocation of a general Council; and an embassy was appointed to solicit his immediate return to his German dominions. Ferdinand, who presided, seems to have offered no opposition to these prudent counsels; and not a voice was raised, even by the adversaries of the Reformation, in behalf of the very device and watchword of their party, the Edict of Worms.

Among the other preparations for resistance to the threatened hostility of this Diet, the reformers carried thither an elaborate justification of their proceedings,

from the pen of Melancthon. He composed it, in conjunction with the other doctors of Wittemberg, by the command of the Elector. The arguments of the apologists were directed to two questions: first, whether it were a lawful act, or an act of schism, to denounce and abolish manifest abuses, without the permission, and even in despite of the prohibition, of the episcopal authorities? secondly, whether it were a lawful act, or an act of revolt, to continue the preaching of the new doctrines in defiance of the edict of the Emperor? In treating the former of these questions, the theologians handled in succession five of the favourite principles of the Roman church—respecting the inviolable power and jurisdiction of the bishops; the long duration of the rejected practices in an infallible church; the scriptural duty of enduring even real grievances, rather than incurring the guilt of disobedience; the duty of a charitable indulgence towards infirm consciences; and that of guarding against the wars and tumults which would arise from the degradation of the spiritual authorities and the overthrow of the established opinions.

The Reformers began the attack by asserting three antagonist principles: That the pastors, as holding their first commission from God, were inviolably bound to preach His word, and most of all the essential doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the merit of works—those works included, to which the highest merit was assigned by the church, and which were no better than superstitious and empty ceremonies: that, false worships and idolatries having been prohibited by God, and sundry doctrines and practices of the church being manifestly such, it became the indispensable duty of every gospel minister to denounce to the faithful those abuses: that the authority of the Pope was a notorious usurpation; yet it might have been tolerated had not the bishops

themselves rendered it insupportable by the neglect of the duties of their ministry, and the employment of their power only for the oppression of the Gospel and the exercise of a tyrannical dominion over the souls and consciences of men.


They then proceeded to confute the five principles of the papists by the following and similar arguments: That the duty of preaching the word of God was inalienable, and anterior to any statutes or obligations that could possibly be imposed by man; and that the bishops, so far from enforcing or even permitting the discharge of that duty, had thwarted it by violent persecutions; that the church consisted, not in the Pope, his cardinals and his clergy, but in the entire body of the faithful; that subservience towards the bishops in respect to the endurance of unscriptural abuses would be disobedience to God; that the tolerance due to weaker brethren was confined to indifferent practices, and could not be extended to corruptions expressly prohibited in Scripture; and that it ill became those to speak of tolerance, who were employing fire and sword in support of their own errors; that if wars and seditions should unhappily arise out of the preaching of the Gospel, the crime would rest with those alone who had endeavoured to extinguish the truth; and that the doctrine of justification by faith was of importance so essential, that no fear either of troubles, wars, or persecutions ought to deter a Christian from professing it.

Thus much respected the spiritual disobedience of the reformers; they urged besides, that the crime of schism rested not so much with them, whose only prayer it was to be permitted to preach the Gospel, as with the papists, who had tyrannically excluded them from the communion of the church. And, as to their political offence in disregarding the imperial edict, they justified it on religious

grounds; maintaining that it was the highest duty of princes to encourage what they believed to be evangelical truth; or if they believed not, at least to tolerate that which possibly might be truth.

In respect to this document, I shall only call attention to one circumstance—that its authors assumed, as already proved and established, the great points at issue betwixt them and the papists. They assumed that the corruptions of the church were convicted and notorious; and in asserting the paramount obligation of the Gospel generally, and of the doctrine of justification in particular, they proclaimed as unquestionable their own new principle of spiritual independence—that is, the inalienable right of every man to think for himself on religious questions, to interpret Scripture according to the measure of his own knowledge, and to act in such matters according to the conscientious conviction of his soul.

There appeared another Paper at this Diet, which is preserved in the archives of Weimar, but without the names of its authors, containing several counsels on these affairs, some of a rational, others of an impracticable nature. Among other suggestions, it recommended the formation of a council of twelve, chosen from the princes, nobles, and the cities in each of the six grand circles of the empire, for the management of all the property of the church; that this property should support the actual possessors during their lives, in their present revenues; but that their places should not be filled up at their death; that it should then be appropriated to the maintenance of the pastors and preachers, and of a bishop for every district, who should take no part in politics, but attend to the government of his diocese; also of an academy in the same circle, and of two or three nunneries for the education of females, which the novices should be permitted to quit when they might choose; and that the



surplus should be applied to the equipment of a local standing army for the service of the Emperor and the empire.

The Diet was again assembled at Spires on the 25th of the June following (1526); and the interval was diligently employed by both parties in strengthening their respective alliances and augmenting the number of their adherents. On the one side the Elector and the Landgrave met at Torgau, and concluded there, on the 4th of May, a defensive alliance, by which they engaged to maintain the Reformation in their States, to provide for the security of their people, and to assist each other with all their forces in repelling all hostile assaults, whether against their dominions, their subjects, or their religion. And this treaty, which was the basis of the League of Smalcald, was immediately embraced by several princes favourable to the cause, and by the city of Magdeburg. On the other side, the Emperor issued secret instructions from Seville, on the 23rd of March, for the closer confederacy of the papists and the extinction of the heresy. In a letter to Henry, Duke of Brunswick, he proclaimed the zeal which he felt for the faith of his forefathers, his resolution presently to visit Rome and Germany, for the purpose of concerting measures against the Lutherans, and his willingness to support any alliance that might be formed in Germany for the defence of the established religion. Similar communications were made to other sovereigns and nobles, who were distinguished by their fidelity to the papal interests. When Charles issued those exhortations, he was on terms of friendship with the Pope. But his adherence to them is remarkable; as during the session of the Diet those relations were altogether changed; and he had then more reason than any man living to complain of the apostolical treachery.

Under these circumstances the Diet met, and imme-

diately proceeded to deliberation. It was very numerous attended, and most of the chiefs of both parties were present. The presidents proposed the subjects of debate ; and in so doing they informed the States, that the Emperor had convoked them for the purpose of preserving the ancient religion, and chastising those opposed to it, according to the provisions of the edict of Worms ; and also of maintaining the peace of the empire in case of sedition or revolt.

The reader will by this time perceive, that that celebrated edict, the result of so much intrigue, and hailed as so great a triumph by the papal adherents, was in effect injurious to them. Ignorant or contemptuous of the opinion and feelings of the people, they saw nothing more than the authority of the Emperor and the physical force which surrounded him. They made no allowance for that moral resistance, founded on strong convictions, which so often prevails against the swords of kings. Besides, they felt compromised by their edict. Even after they began to discover the impossibility of enforcing it, they clung to it with perverse tenacity ; and thus, through their obstinate defence of an untenable position, gave the victory to their enemies. A law, too violent to be executed, did but lay bare the injustice of the cause which it was intended to protect.

It was thus at the Diet of Spires. The Instruction of the Emperor offended the feelings of the great majority of the assembly ; and the evangelical party took their stand on the more recent Recess of Nuremberg. They demanded the appointment of the commission, then decreed for the provisional arrangement of religious differences, and even proposed the members who should form it. The ambassadors of Charles pleaded the peremptory character of their orders ; wherein he expressly charged them to withstand every attempt at change, whether in

doctrine or ceremony, and reminded them that he had already abrogated the edict in question. But the reformers remained firm, and those who offered the most decided and fearless resistance were the deputies of the imperial cities. They asserted the practical nullity of the edict of Worms and the propriety of suspending it. They deplored the continual absence of the Emperor, and his consequent ignorance of the real condition of the country. They urged the necessity of assembling forthwith a national council, at least for the temporary accommodation of the dispute. And as to the revolts which had occurred, and the evils which had attended them, they imputed them entirely to the wrongs which had been inflicted upon the people, and to the reiterated contempt which had ever been shown to popular remonstrances. At the same time they observed, that those seditions had been least violent in the states which had embraced the Reformation.

But they did not stop there. They followed up these remonstrances by certain demands, which contained indeed a very moderate expression of their own principles, but which were in direct contradiction to the will of the Emperor, and were the boldest that had yet been addressed to the States of the empire. They required: That the monasteries of the mendicants, with a due respect to vested interests, should be suppressed, since they consumed the alms intended for the subsistence of the poor; that those monks should be no longer permitted to make the wills of persons on the point of death; that ecclesiastics should be no longer exempt from public charges, because they were now neither poor nor few, as they had been when those exemptions were granted; that the number of festivals should be reduced, as tending to impoverish and corrupt the working classes; that all distinction of meats should be abolished; that the observance

of ceremonies, which were indifferent, should be left to the free discretion of the people, until the decision of the council; and that the course of the Gospel should in no manner be restrained.

The firmness of the evangelical party, the solid justice of their demands, and the temper with which they urged them, produced a great effect upon all who were not previously engaged to the opposite policy. Those, and there were many, who sincerely desired the repose of the empire and the removal of all proved abuses, however they might dislike or fear the name of Luther, listened without disapprobation to the proposals of the free cities. The ecclesiastical princes almost alone resisted; but with so much violence and obstinacy, that there seemed little probability of any agreement, and the Elector and the Landgrave were making preparations for their departure. Meanwhile ambassadors arrived from the King of Hungary, representing the calamities with which that country was overwhelmed, and the danger which threatened all the rest of Europe from the triumphant progress of the Turks. They had taken Peterwaradin, and were advancing towards Buda with a numerous force; the provinces of Ferdinand were contiguous and exposed to immediate peril.*

This circumstance, aided by the political perplexities which at that moment appeared to beset the Emperor,

* Luther mentions, in a letter to Wenceslas Link, written during the Diet (Aug. 28, 1526) from Wittemberg, that great exertions were then making to fortify that city. "*Nihil hic novi est, nisi quod Wittembergæ munitur magno labore, ut vix agnosceres, si priscam conferres cum præsente.*" (No. 817.) In the same letter he speaks contemptuously of the labours of the Diet, after his fashion: "*Spiræ comitia sunt more solito Germanis comitia celebrandi—potatur et luditur, præterea nihil.*" It so happened that this was written on the very day after the publication of an edict, more advantageous to his cause than any public act, till that of Nuremberg in 1532.

decided the Archduke to prevent that open breach, to which the affairs of Germany were approaching. In conjunction with the Archbishop of Treves, who was not the avowed adherent of either party, he applied himself to calm the fury of the prelates, and to lead them step by step to more temperate counsels. At length, (on the 27th of August,) after much negociation, through the difficulty of devising an edict in terms not positively offensive to either party, the Recess was published. It was to this effect: That for the establishment of a form of worship and the tranquillity of the empire a legitimate council, either of Germany or of the whole world, was necessary; that it should be convoked within the space of a year; that an embassy should be sent to the Emperor to entreat him to behold with his own eyes the disturbed condition of the country, and to bring about this council; and that, in respect to the edict of Worms, all the princes should so conduct the administration of their States, pending the decision of the proposed council, as to be able to render account of their government both to God and to the Emperor.*

This decision was a manifest triumph for the evangelical party, and that not in fact only, but also in principle. Not only did it virtually suspend the edict of Worms, and leave the reformers to their own undisputed government for an indefinite space of time, and that a long space, as was obvious enough to all who knew the character of Clement and the policy of Rome; but even after this, it committed the regulation of the ecclesiastical concerns of Germany to a future council. Thus it rejected the existing authorities; it put aside the canons and constitutions enacted in former times; and above all, it renounced the very profession of unqualified obedience

* Sleidan, l. vi. p. 88.

to the edicts of Rome. The same spirit had indeed been already displayed both at Nuremberg and at Augsburg. But on the present occasion the assembly was so numerously attended, every elector except one being present, and the result was so unequivocal, and in such direct opposition to the loudly expressed dictation of the Emperor, that it becomes proper to examine how far it may have been influenced by political causes.

The triumphs of the Turk, and the dangers immediately impending over the dominions of Ferdinand, have been mentioned. I shall now trace in very few pages the course of public events in Italy, France and Spain during this period. The two great rivals who were disputing the possession of Italy were both objects of suspicion with Clement, but the more powerful of the greater suspicion. His first connexions were formed with the Emperor. But presently growing jealous of his designs, and willing to disturb his authority over the Neapolitan States, he suddenly transferred his friendship, and concluded a treaty of neutrality with the King of France. This occurred during the siege of Pavia by the French, in the winter of 1524-5. Very soon afterwards, on the 24th of February, Francis was defeated by the Imperialists, and became the prisoner of his enemy.* Great terror immediately spread among the

* Luther's remarks on this event, expressed in a letter to Spalatin of March 11, 1525 (No. 681), deserve to be recorded: "I am not glad that the King of the French has been defeated and taken—his defeat I could have borne, but his captivity is monstrous. Cæsar now triumphs, but it will be his turn to yield presently. Yet this perpetual overthrow of kings and princes in this age seems to me one of those signs, which attest the approach of the last day and the destruction of the world. . . . One thing pleases me, that the attempt of Antichrist has been frustrated, who had begun to employ the King of France as his instrument; and thus God has manifested his determination to defeat all the councils of this other tyrant of souls. . . . Cæsar triumphat, ut et ipse cedat tan-

Italian States. It was supposed that a victorious prince, young and of unbounded ambition, would pursue his advantages to the destruction of their independence. Some hasty attempts at confederacy and co-operation produced no result; till Clement was terrified or cajoled into a separate treaty with the imperial viceroy, by which he obliged himself, on certain conditions, to the immediate payment of a considerable sum of money. The money was paid, but the conditions were not ratified by the Emperor; so that the vicar of Christ, after having extracted, by spiritual impostures, such masses of wealth from princes and their subjects, found himself at length and perhaps for the first time a pecuniary sufferer, through a political fraud. The treaty was signed on April 1, 1525, and the result proves at least this—that Charles was not at that time disposed to show any obsequiousness, personal or political, to the bishop of Rome. Yet it was in the very following month (May 24, 1525) that he published the edict of Toledo, in which he convoked the Diet of Augsburg, and thundered forth the most fearful denunciations against the Lutheran heresy.

The victory of Pavia was not followed by any very important military movements, and the year was chiefly spent by Charles in those negotiations with his prisoner, which ended in the Treaty of Madrid, on Jan. 24, 1526. Francis, restored to liberty, immediately sought means to evade the conditions to which he owed that liberty; and the Pope, still trembling at the predominance of the Emperor, was at hand to aid him. He effected a league, to which the Venetians and the Duke of Milan were parties, and of which the grand professed object was to

dem; quanquam sic reges et principes dejici nostro sæculo mihi unum de signis esse videtur testantibus casurum mundum per novissimum diem."

destroy the Spanish power in Italy. This he denominated the *Holy* League; and that he might set his own seal of sanctity upon it, and consecrate it by an act peculiarly pontifical, at a moment when the church was so resolutely assailed and the eyes of all suspiciously fixed upon its conduct, in the plenitude of his apostolical power, he absolved the King of France from all his oaths, and authorised the violation of the treaty.

The Holy League was proclaimed on the 11th of June, a few days before the meeting of that Diet of which the acts have just been recorded. And assuredly, if the ecclesiastical policy of Charles had been directed by the state of his relations with the See of Rome, or by the feelings which he could not fail to entertain towards the individual who possessed it, his ambassadors at that assembly would not have been found in the very van of the papal party. There can, then, be no question that he was sincere in his enmity to the new opinions; and it may be, that Clement counted upon this before he ventured on so bold an opposition. This was the policy which he had adopted from the beginning, and from which he never deviated very far. It was no doubt founded on the despot's jealousy of any insurrection against any established authority, intellectual or physical, spiritual or secular; and so decided was it, that even the indignation, which must have filled him at that moment, did not divert him from it. Still those political circumstances may have exercised some indirect influence on the efficacy of his ecclesiastical policy. His private friends and adherents and courtiers could scarcely at that crisis be very zealous advocates of papal interests. The papal party, fighting under the imperial banner, was to a certain extent, in a false position. There could not exist between them that perfect unity of purpose and

feeling, which will sometimes give success even to the less numerous party in great public deliberations ; while the reformers, who were bound together by a common interest as well as a common passion, and whom no disputes or jealousies yet divided, engaged to an advantage in the struggles then proceeding, and triumphed accordingly.

Clement attempted to justify his perfidy by a communication* to the Emperor, alleging many injuries that he had suffered, in return for many services that he had conferred. Charles replied from Granada ; and after relating in the same spirit many particulars of the civil transactions between himself and Clement, he proceeded as follows : “ Out of my kingdoms and provinces more emoluments and annual income are exported to Rome, than from all other nations put together. This may be proved from the well-known grievances of the German princes, when they brought their heavy complaints against the court of Rome and demanded a remedy. But I, through the reverence in which I held the Roman church, disregarded their remonstrances. On which account, and because I have given you no just cause for reproach, I entreat you, retire from arms ; I will then do likewise. For since we are constituted by God as two mighty luminaries, let us use our endeavours to give light to the world, lest an eclipse should be occasioned by our dissention. Let us reflect upon the universal commonwealth, on the necessity of repelling the barbarians, and repressing the sects and errors of the Lutherans.

* Consisting in fact of two letters, which were delivered to the Emperor, by the Nuncio in Spain, on two following days—the former objurgatory, the latter conciliatory. The Emperor replied to both after the same fashion—to the one on Sept. 17, to the other on Sept. 18. The former is in each case the really important one.

These are matters which concern the glory of God ; and here let us make our beginning. Afterwards, let us discuss all the other controversies, and you will find me well prepared for all these things. But if you refuse these proposals and persist in your warlike projects, I give you warning that I shall appeal to a council for the decision of the existing differences and demand its immediate convocation."

In another epistle addressed a few days afterwards (on October 6) to the Consistory of Cardinals, Charles made it again a boast that he had disregarded the grievances of the German princes, expressed at Worms, through his paramount affection for the See of Rome ; that, when still greater troubles arose and many tumults occurred throughout Germany and the States ordained a general assembly for the settlement of the religious disputes, he had prevented them from persisting in that project, only through fear of the damage which such an assembly would have occasioned to the church and Pope of Rome ; that he had soothed them with the empty hope of a future council ; and that he had alienated their affections by those proceedings. After this enumeration of his good offices, he repeated his conviction that a general council was really necessary for the welfare of Christendom, and exhorted them, should the Pope refuse to convoke it, to convoke it themselves.*

But Clement was of all men the least likely to obey that call. For, besides the general apprehensions with which the Popes of later ages invariably regarded those meetings—and Clement was of a character peculiarly apprehensive—he was deterred by the somewhat notorious circumstance, that his own election had not been free from irregularity ; so that he had some reason to fear

* Sleidan, lib. vi. fol. 90.

that the first act of the assembled representatives of the church might be to depose himself. The cardinals on their side, approving of his policy and aiding him very heartily in his opposition to any change in the church, were not disposed to insubordination. Thus the double remonstrance of Charles fell without any weight upon either party. Yet was it not without effect in Germany, where it was immediately published, not only as disclosing some of the springs of the Emperor's policy, but also because two great antipapal principles were broached in it. For it contained, at least by implication, not only an appeal from a Pope to a council, but also an acknowledgment that the power of convoking such council resided in the body of cardinals no less than in the Pope himself.

The holy alliance terminated in a catastrophe, which might seem to mark the wrath of Providence against the perfidy and perjury in which it was founded. The city of Rome was stormed by the Imperial forces on the 6th of May, 1527, and Clement, after some contemptible vacillation and a vain attempt at another act of political apostacy, witnessed with his own eyes the conquest of his capital.* For instead of escaping away from this calamity, according to the maxims of his customary caution, he had the temerity to retire to the castle of St. Angelo and to attempt its defence. During a month of close blockade, while an uninterrupted variety of barbarities was perpetrated upon his subjects in his very

* Luther, in a letter to Hausman of July 13, 1527, thus remarks on that event: "*Roma vastata est miserabiliter; sic regnante Christo, ut Cæsar, pro Papa Lutherum persequens, pro Luthero Papam cogatur vastare. Omnia scilicet serviunt Christo,*" &c. (No. 885.) "Christ has so controlled events, that the Emperor, who would persecute Luther in the cause of the Pope, is compelled to overthrow the Pope in the cause of Luther."


presence by the fierce and rapacious conquerors, after sustaining the extremities of famine, he surrendered, on the 6th of June, his fortress and his person to the indignant enemy. Thus Charles, within little more than a year after the liberation of his royal prisoner, had the singular fortune to replace him by the captivity of the spiritual despot.

Meanwhile, the fatal battle of Moharz, in which Lewis II. King of Hungary and Bohemia fell together with the flower of his nobility (Aug. 29, 1526), delivered up a large portion of the Hungarian provinces to the arms of Solyman. Ferdinand Archduke of Austria claimed the vacant crowns under a plausible title, which was further recommended by his personal merits and his close relationship to the greatest monarch in Christendom. The crowns were elective, and the votes were divided between him and the Vayvode of Transylvania; but the larger party supported the claims of Ferdinand, and he received the double sceptre. By his advancement to this perilous dignity, his presence was continually required in the eastern parts of his dominions; and his attention and schemes were thus carried away from the intestine broils of the German people to close and deadly conflict with the common enemy. The cry of a Turkish invasion, which with so many other princes, secular as well as ecclesiastical, was often no more than a pretence to conceal projects of avarice or ambition, became with him the honest expression of a well-founded apprehension. There must we seek thenceforward for the key of his policy. However sincere and deep might be his detestation of the Lutheran faction, he was now absorbed by a stronger hatred and a nearer interest, to which all other considerations became more or less subordinate.

After a confinement of six months in the castle of St. Angelo the Pope was liberated, on the 6th of Decem-

ber, 1527, on the payment of a considerable sum and the engagement to make still larger disbursements. Meanwhile the war between Francis and the Emperor continued, and was conducted for some time to the advantage of the former, whose forces laid siege to Naples. But they were presently (Aug. 15, 1528) compelled to raise the siege; the loss of Genoa succeeded the disaster at Naples; and operations were again confined to the territory of Milan. At length all parties, wearied with this unprofitable struggle, renewed their negotiations with more sincerity. On the 20th June, 1529, Charles granted, at Barcelona, a separate and very favourable treaty to the Pope; and, on the 5th of August following, the peace of Cambrai was concluded between the rival monarchs. A few days afterwards, the Emperor landed in Italy with the pomp and authority of a monarch, which he tempered with his wonted policy. He regulated the affairs committed to him with moderation and justice. He won the praise of the Italians by his courteous and graceful manner, as well as by a decent observance of the ceremonies of religion; and on his appointed interview with the Pope at Bologna (on the 5th of November) he kneeled to kiss the foot of the man, so lately his prisoner, with a reverential abasement, which would have become the very humblest among the subjects of the church.

This hasty sketch was necessary to show, how entirely the principal powers of Europe were engrossed by political concerns during the period immediately preceding and following the Diet of Spires. And those affairs were not of trifling or temporary importance, but pregnant with events on a larger scale and of more lasting consequence, than any which had yet marked the international concerns of Christendom. The anti-Lutheran projects of Charles were doubtless suspended by his actual hostility with the Pope—those of Ferdinand by his close collision



with the Infidel. These circumstances secured to the reformers a valuable interval of repose and toleration, which gave them opportunity to consolidate their strength, to increase the numbers of their adherents, to understand their own principles, and to prevent, had that been possible, the threatening disease of their dissensions.

As a council of the empire, which was convoked at Ratisbon, for the March of 1528, for the purpose of deliberating on the two grand subjects of German interest, the state of religion and the Turkish war, did not take effect, there was no general assembly of the states from the recess of the first Diet of Spires (Aug. 27, 1526) to the meeting of the second, on March 15, 1529. But in the mean time a curious occurrence took place, which forms a sort of episode in this history, and throws light on the temper and conduct of the evangelical princes. A lawyer named Otho Pack, of a noble family in Misnia, one of the principal councillors of George Duke of Saxony, took occasion, during a conference with the Landgrave of Hesse, to warn him of a great impending danger. He assured him of the existence of a secret treaty among the papal chiefs for the destruction of the reformers. He communicated the names of the confederates—Ferdinand, then King of Bohemia, Joachim of Brandenburg, George of Saxony, the two Dukes William and Louis of Bavaria, and the prelates of Mayence, Saltzburg, Bamberg and Wurtzburg. He mentioned the time and place of the conclusion of this confederacy, Breslau, May 27, 1527. He disclosed the stipulations;*

* Among them were the following: That the Elector should be first entreated, and, if that failed, compelled, to deliver up to the confederates the arch-heretic Martin Luther, and with him all the other heretical preachers and pastors; that all apostate monks and nuns should be restored to their convents; that all masses, rites and ceremonies should be placed on the ancient footing: and it was particularly arranged which

he even exhibited a copy of the treaty, and promised to produce the original.

The Landgrave and the Elector of Saxony, as being most nearly menaced by this transaction, united in strong and immediate measures of resistance. The sword, they argued, had been committed to them by God for the defence of their states; and they were now more than ever bound to draw it, since He had likewise vouchsafed to them and to their subjects the knowledge of his holy gospel. They would not in any way permit this treasure to be wrested from them by the base councils of their opponents; but rather would they stake thereon life, honour, dignity, lands, subjects, everything that was held valuable in this world. When their forces were assembled and they were in readiness, if needful, for offensive operations, they proclaimed to all, who were parties to the league, that they were aware of its existence, and demanded information respecting the intentions of the confederates.

The princes severally replied with the strongest assurances that no such league did exist, and that no such treaty had ever been concluded; and George of Saxony with especial vehemence required the investigation of the charge. These declarations were confirmed by the failure of Pack to exhibit the original; and the two princes probably lent no unwilling ear to the pacific professions of so formidable a body. At length, after some negotiation, they disbanded their forces on certain stipulations. On an appointed day the author of the confusion was publicly accused at Cassel by the ambassadors of the potentates aggrieved. He was convicted of falsehood and driven into exile in Flanders. Thither

provinces should be overrun, in case of refusal, and by which power of the confederacy.

he was pursued by the unrelenting enmity of the Duke of Saxony; and eight years afterwards he made a tardy atonement by death for an act, which, if not a mischievous forgery, was a treacherous breach of faith. There were many who persisted in believing that it was the latter; that, notwithstanding the formality of his condemnation, there was at least some strong foundation for his tale; and that the treaty, if not actually ratified, had made some progress towards its conclusion.* The league, formed at Ratisbon four years before among members of the same party, of whom several were individually the same, justified this opinion and the decided measures which it occasioned.

The energy displayed by the two evangelical princes may be chiefly ascribed to the influence of the Landgrave; whose more impatient and active character sought safety in bold expedients, and prepared to repel the danger by advancing to meet it. The Elector, though not less firm, was more cautious; and this disposition was in this instance encouraged by the pacific counsels of his theologians at Wittemberg. They addressed to him several pressing admonitions to adopt a moderate and defensive policy. Luther, Melancthon and Pomeranus urged him, in a joint composition, to show every forbearance and cling to every hope of peace, so that the crime of blood might not at least rest with him. They advised him to despatch an embassy to the Imperial Court, to remonstrate with the several members of the league, to establish an interest among others who were not yet compromised—in short, to try every expedient rather than resort to military aggression. The two former of those

* The courtiers of Duke George are said scarcely to have denied the league. The court of Saxony continued to believe in it; and Spalatin, in his manuscript history, deplored the fate of Pack, as having atoned by exile and death for saving the Reformation.

divines expressed similar sentiments, supported by many references to Holy Writ, in a letter to the young prince, John Frederick, dated on the 18th of May;* and soon afterwards Melancthon urged the Chancellor Pontanus with like exhortations. The argument was placed on theological grounds, and religious scruples weighed so much with Luther, that he even counselled his master rather to break off his treaty with the Landgrave than to engage in any measure of offence.

Such remonstrances, proceeding from such authority, had no doubt their effect in moderating the violence of the Landgrave, and restraining him from any hasty enterprise; and the praise of wisdom as well as humanity may possibly be due to the divines who offered them. But I must remark that they were not so much occasioned by any doubts as to the existence of the treaty,† and of the dangers which it threatened, as by that fixed and sound principle of Luther's policy which rejected

* Herein they propounded, among other Christian sentiments, "War gains little, loses much, and ventures all; but gentleness loses nothing, ventures little, and gains everything."

† Luther wrote thus to Amsdorf on June 13, 1528: "*Excusationes eorum apud me nihil concludunt; cum certum sit, animo, facto, edicto et omni studio eos hactenus egisse, agere voluisse, et etiamnum velle, quod istud fœdus multipliciter in se continet. . .*" On the following day he wrote to Link to the same effect: "*Fœdus istud principum impiorum, quod ipsi negant, vides quantos motus moverit. Sed ego ducis Georgii frigidissimam excusationem fere pro confessione interpretor. Sed negent, excusent, fingant; ego sciens scio non esse fœdus istud merum nihil aut chimæram, licet monstrum sit monstruosum satis. . .*" And this was followed in December by a desperate attack on Duke George, in the form of another letter to Link: "*Te quæso ut cum ecclesia tua (that of Nuremberg) ores contra furiosum istum homicidam sanguinariumque latronem et plane non ab uno dæmone possessum, nihil nisi cædes et minas spirantem, ut Christus vel servet eum, sicuti Paulum, vel de medio tollat. Quid enim divexat cœlum et terram organum hoc Satanæ noxium et inquietum?*" The prince had just before published an invective against Luther, to which the latter had instantly replied.

every appeal to force, and sought success in the operation of reason and the sword of the spirit. Charles, on his part, when informed of these proceedings, sent a rebuke from Toledo, on Nov. 9, in a tone of unusual haughtiness, to the Elector. He reproached him for having engaged on such slight grounds in so rash an undertaking, and disturbed, through his hasty belief of an improbable fiction, and without any previous communication with himself, the repose of the German empire.

CHAPTER XXV.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE REFORMERS.

The Council of Sens—publishes fifty-six articles—their substance—remarks—Luther establishes the Saxon Church—his great caution—in respect to the alteration of ceremonies—his homilies—two catechisms—depredations of certain nobles on the church property—zeal of Luther in repelling them—his interview with the Elector—the anti-reformers charged with being the plunderers—general visitation of Saxony—the visitors—the Elector's instructions to the commissioners—means suggested for promoting the Reformation—among the pastors and among the people—other regulations—remarks—on the principle and practice of toleration as adopted by the Lutherans—dealings with the canons of Altenburg—edicts issued by Ferdinand against the Lutherans—remarks—education a favourite object with Luther—proposal to grant to certain patrons a portion of the value of their benefices—the book of doctrines and ceremonies—some of the articles contained in it—two letters of Luther on the subject of ceremonies—expressing great moderation—how the Catholics misrepresent this—the Landgrave of Hesse, advised by Melancthon, calls an assembly of his clergy at Homberg, and establishes the Reformation—Francis Lambert—the plague raging at Wittemberg, Luther refuses to desert his post.

THE principles of the Reformation, ten years after their first promulgation, had made very slight impression upon the people of France—sufficient however to alarm the jealousy and rouse the zeal of her prelates. Antoine du Prat was Archbishop of Sens and Primate of France; he was likewise Cardinal of St. Anastasia and Legate of the Pope; and from this eminence he was believed to entertain the not unreasonable ambition of ascending to the highest. Accordingly, to testify his ardour for the *See of Rome* and to overthrow the hopes of its opponents,

he summoned a council of his suffragans. It is known in history as the Council of Sens; but it was held in the Archiepiscopal palace at Paris. Its first meeting was in the February of 1527, and it was prolonged till the October of the following year.

This council is not nearly so remarkable for the sentence which it pronounced on the various heresies of Luther, as for the many acknowledgments which it made of the abuses of the church, and the decrees which it propounded for removing them. It issued fifty-six articles, of which sixteen only related to doctrine, the rest to the reformation of certain points in the externals of the church. These articles are of little historical importance, except as far as they prove how limited were the concessions which even the more liberal among the adherents of Rome were prepared to make to the popular discontent—what was the sort of compromise which they proposed, so as to satisfy the just demands of the Gospel without offending the authority of Rome. The scheme of Campeggio, proceeding from a devoted minister of the See, was of course fallacious and contemptible. But from the primates of the Gallican church, which even yet boasted its ancient privileges and partial independence, some deeper views might have been expected, some more enlightened and honest exertions to purify their communion.

The extreme ignorance which disgraced the priesthood was in some degree occasioned by the facility with which candidates, rejected by their own bishops, obtained ordination at Rome. To prevent this evil, it was decreed that those ordained at Rome should be re-examined, and suspended from any clerical duties, until they should exhibit the requisite qualifications. The parochial ministers were likewise commanded to explain to the

people the Lord's Prayer and the Creed ; or, if themselves incapable, to read a chapter from the Book of Gerson. One or two festivals were abolished. Soft and effeminate music was prohibited in the service of God. The *Gloria Patri* was to be chanted standing, and every head to bend whenever the name of Jesus was pronounced. The bishops were to correct the breviaries, missals and legends of the saints. Some regulations were published respecting the habiliments of the clergy ; they were forbidden on the one hand to appear in tattered garments, and on the other to wear their outward vestment of silk—an exception, however, being made in favour of such as belonged to any great family.

But while such minute restrictions were imposed, and with such an exception, the practice of concubinage was treated with mildness. Those, living in notorious violation of one of the first principles of Christian morality, were only exhorted to change their manner of life, otherwise the canons would be enforced against them.

To correct that long-denounced scandal, the abuse of excommunication, the clergy were commanded to be more sparing in the employment of that weapon, and at least not to unsheathe it in avenging a verbal injury, unless it were one of a very atrocious description. In respect to images, as it was acknowledged that many of a lascivious and antiscriptural character had found their way into the churches, it was ordained that none should thenceforward be suspended there without the approbation of the bishop ; and in like manner, as the credulity of the faithful had been frequently and confessedly insulted by false miracles in order to feed the avarice of the clergy, it was decreed that no title, chapel, or altar should be set up, either within any church or without it, except by the same episcopal authority.

These and such as these were the regulations* published by the hierarchy of France, after a deliberation of twenty months, as a sufficient remedy for the corruptions of the church and a satisfactory substitute for the reformation of Luther. They require no further observation. Proceeding from a synod of prelates, it was scarcely to be expected that they should touch any one of the manifold iniquities of the prelacy. But even the defects of the inferior clergy, even the vices of the lower departments of the sacred office, were touched with so sparing and partial a hand, as to prove at once that any substantial improvement from that quarter was altogether hopeless, and to justify by one additional argument the enterprise of the Saxon reformer.

Meanwhile Luther, being free from any immediate fear of outward aggression, was proceeding to construct in his own churches new services of worship in the place of those which he had condemned; and in this delicate work he continued to advance with a caution surprising to those who understood not its delicacy. He would not yet (in 1526) consent to the entire abolition of the Latin mass;† he persisted in retaining for the present some Latin hymns and canticles; he recommended the strict observance of Lent, though without imposing a positive obligation; and he retained the sacred vestments, tapers and altars until it should be safe to remove them. But

* It is Pallavicino's remark (lib. ii. cap. xii.) "that the doctrine received at Sens was precisely that which was afterwards established by the Universal Council of Trent."

† This year he published his "Teutsche Messe und Ordnung des Gottesdienstes." The reason which he gives in this work for retaining the Latin service is far from satisfactory: "That the young men might be serviceable to Christ in foreign lands and communicate with foreigners, and not be as helpless as the Waldenses were in Bohemia, who had shut up their own faith in their own language, and had no medium of religious intercourse with the people of that country."

at the same time he established the use of catechisms for the illustration of the Creed, the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer; and in the appointed services for the several days in the week he inserted explanations of the Epistle and Gospel of the day, as well as other portions of Scripture, both from the Old and New Testaments. To such ministers as were unable to preach he enjoined the reading of appointed homilies, as a method of instruction which would at least preserve the people from the legends of the ancient system and the puerilities of illiterate preachers. He ventured, besides, to abolish certain profane and ridiculous ceremonies and usages; but his retrenchments in these matters were conducted with remarkable discretion; as he acted upon his general principle that ceremonies were things indifferent, and that, so long as the doctrine was preserved in purity, they might be left to die away of themselves, through the gradual progress of holy teaching. "Above all," he said, "we must bring the simple-minded and the young to the knowledge of the Gospel by perpetual instruction. And to this end we must read, sing, preach, write prose and poetry; and, if such means would further this good purpose, I would let them ring all the bells, and play all the organs, and make every possible noise that man can make."

The homilies recommended to the pastors were composed by himself, as well as the formulary delivered to the faithful. The Elector promulgated an edict, by which he established them as the service of the Saxon church; and he found such ready obedience, that among all the landed proprietors in his dominions, many of whom possessed a direct control over the parochial churches, two only hesitated in their compliance, and that for a very short time only. Preachers were then sent forth into every part of the electorate, and the per-

fecting of this provisional institution was committed to their exertions, gradually operating to undermine the remnants of hereditary prejudices.

Three years afterwards Luther published his two catechisms—works considered of so much value in that age, that in 1580 they were received among the symbolical books of his church. The first of these contained no more than a succinct exposition of his articles of faith. The second entered more into detail respecting the points treated in it, which are the Creed, the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. The necessity of some such work of authority was discovered during a complete visitation of the churches, which had been made in 1527 and 1528.

In the preface to his Second Catechism we find the author strongly deprecating, and not for the first time, a serious evil which threatened both the safety and the honour of the Reformation. As early as the year 1526, after the death of Frederick and under the indulgent sceptre of his successor, some lords of Thuringia, men of credit at court, began to appropriate to themselves portions of the ecclesiastical property. It was not that the Elector connived at this fraud, but it was easily concealed from his unsuspicious eye. And we may remark, though with no surprise, that those who began this practice were adherents of the ancient system, men who from the beginning had been adverse to the cause of Luther. Luther was no sooner made acquainted by Spalatin with these transactions, than he took effectual measures to stop them. "This matter is very serious," he replied, "respecting the plunder of the monasteries, and you may believe that it torments me exceedingly. I have long ago written to the effect you desire; but not contented with it, I have done more. When the prince was here I forced myself into his very bedchamber, against every

one's consent, that I might have a private audience with him on the subject. . . . And to me it is the bitterest drop of this most bitter draught, that they who have ever been, and who still are, the enemies of the Gospel, those who tried to chill the piety of Frederick, now that a chance of plunder presents itself, are loud and insulting in their exultations; thinking that under the name of the Gospel they can most effectually damage the Gospel, and at the same time enjoy all the licences of the Gospel."

Luther did not stop there. He addressed a remonstrance to John Frederick, the Elector's son, in the presence of the whole court. And he made it known to Spalatin that, unless the prince should at once repress the evil, he would himself denounce the transaction in the face of all Christendom by a public appeal to his justice; which required that those funds should be applied to the use of the poor and of the public, to whom they properly belonged. "The prince," continued Luther, "is a man of honour, and exposes himself to every one's artifices, because he believes every one to be like himself, good and honourable. A man ought to be wicked if he must be a prince—a king ought to rule like a tyrant: the world will have it so. . . ."*

There were several among the landed proprietors who affected to believe that, since the restoration of the Gospel, there was no longer any necessity for an order of ministers, or for any sacred edifices; and accordingly they refused to support the clergy and to repair the churches. That such selfish rapacity should have stained the character of the Reformation is a circumstance to be deplored, rather than palliated; the more so, as the transgressors were for the most part mere pretenders to evan-

* "*Homo fidelis est et omnium versutiis expositus, et qui credat homines esse sui similes, bonos et fideles. Nequam esse oportet qui princeps esse debet, et tyrannum decet regem esse. Hoc exigit mundus.*"

gelical principles. Yet, if all who advocated the cause of Luther had been, like their master, sincere, devout, and disinterested, this had been a regeneration, not of the church only, but of human nature likewise. The existence of such impure worldly adherents was, of course, no argument against the principles which they falsely professed. But it proved to Luther and the other chiefs of the party that their dangers were not all from avowed adversaries or dissentients—that it was not enough to confute the Papists on the one side and the Anabaptists and Sacramentaries on the other—unless they could establish on a solid foundation an ecclesiastical system for themselves, with a strict attention to external as well as spiritual objects, so as to secure by laws and discipline the purity and honour of their communion.

With this view the Elector, after some respectful but vain communication with his bishops, undertook in 1527* a general visitation through his dominions. He divided them into four districts, and appointed a commission for each, consisting partly of divines, partly of laymen distinguished by station or birth. The district nearest to Wittemberg was assigned to Luther, Justus Jonas and Pomeranus, associated with the Prefect of Wittemberg and three other laymen of consequence.

* Luther, in a letter to Hausman, of July 13, 1527 (No. 885), mentions that the visitation was begun, Schurff and Melancthon having set out on it eight days before. The difficulties encountered by the latter in the performance of his office are somewhat querulously stated: "Ego" (says Melancthon, lib. iv., ep. 58) "in molestissimis negotiis hoc tempore et quidem nullo cum fructu, quantum video, versor. Adeo sunt omnia perturbata partim inscitia doctentium, partim improbitate." These impediments doubtless existed, but it is not easy to understand how his exertions, so judiciously directed and so strongly supported by the civil authority, could be fruitless.

The province called Osterland, comprehending Altenburg and Zwickau, was committed to Spalatin, Musa and Fusius, assisted by six laymen, prefects, or counsellors. Melancthon, Myconius and others were appointed to inspect Thuringia; and others of less note were sent to that part of Franconia which was under the jurisdiction of the Elector.

The Book of Instructions issued to the commissioners contained some particulars worthy of record, as disclosing the internal condition of the religious affairs of Saxony at that period, and the principles by which the Elector was guided in amending it. After setting forth to the nobility, magistrates, pastors, schoolmasters and the deputies of the people, the great blessing which the revival of the Gospel had bestowed on them and the gratitude due for it to Providence, the visitors were instructed to express their sorrow that there were still many who clung to the ancient abuses, and some so unthankful for God's benefits as to refuse to His ministers and preachers their rightful salaries; let these be exhorted to reflection and obedience.

Next they were directed to examine the doctrine and lives of the pastors. Those, who should be found absolutely disqualified for their office, were to be removed and pensioned and others appointed in their places. Those, who should persevere in teaching false doctrines, or with sound doctrine in leading immoral lives, were to be expelled without any compensation. Those, who gave hope of improvement, might properly be transferred to some other place. Such as should persist in publicly propounding pernicious opinions were to be sent into exile—not that the Elector wished to force any one's faith—but that he could not carry toleration so far as not to coerce and chastise those, who pertinaciously ex-

cited disturbances and sedition. Among the vulgar, those, whose religious notions were incorrect, were to be subjected to a course of instruction; and if they persevered in rejecting the truth, a certain time was to be allowed them to sell their goods and depart from the country; any contumaciousness was to be visited with punishment.

The number of pastors and schoolmasters was to be increased wherever it was necessary, and the funds of the vacant churches and monasteries to be in part applied to their maintenance. The larger benefices were to be taxed for the increase of the smaller in their neighbourhood. And the visitors were desired to consider whether some portion (a third for instance) of the benefices in the patronage of nobles and other individuals might not be set apart to relieve the necessities, should such exist, of the patrons, or to assist the literary studies of young men, or as dowries for the daughters of the patrons. Measures were likewise proposed to protect the ecclesiastical revenues against fraud, and persons appointed to enforce the laws against debtors in behalf of the clergy, and thus prevent collision between them and their parishioners. Many regulations were suggested for the enforcement of discipline and the discouragement of every sort of immorality, both among the ecclesiastics and the people. Inquisitions were likewise instituted into the condition of the remaining monasteries and convents with a view to the amendment of their inmates, and to reducing them under the yoke of the Gospel.

The following are the remarks which are most obviously suggested by this document:—

The sort of toleration therein proposed was not far removed from a modified form of persecution. As far as the clergy were concerned, we observe that the teachers

of "false doctrines" were to be punished by deprivation; nor can we censure that resolution—but connected with it we cannot fail to perceive the disposition, so inherent in the dominant religion, to connect dissent with sedition, and to chastise the former under the plea of repressing or preventing the latter. In respect to the people, they were undisguisedly condemned to exile if they should persevere in rejecting "the truth." The greater mercy of the reformers consisted in abstaining from the infliction of confiscation, imprisonment, or death.

These principles are illustrated by an event which occurred a few years earlier in this history. In 1525 the canons of Altenburg, in that electorate, desirous to retain in their church the ancient mass, requested the mediation of Duke George to that effect. Luther was consulted on the subject by the Elector, and his reply amounted to this: "That the mass being idolatrous, the Elector had the undoubted right of interdicting it; that in truth it was never lawful to force any one's conscience, or to oblige any one to renounce any worship which he might consider true; but that the prince could prohibit that worship, if he thought it criminal." The canons persevered; and in the following year Luther was again consulted. He answered (Feb. 6, 1526), "That the Elector ought not to tolerate in one of his own churches a worship offensive to himself and to his subjects; but that, if the canons pleaded conscience, they might continue to celebrate their mass in private and to defend it by their writings as publicly as they might choose; only they must not be allowed to retain their revenues and dignities." And this counsel was followed.

There are writers who applaud the moderation of Luther in this transaction, and with unquestionable justice, if we are only to compare it with the spirit of the

Inquisition. Yet what did it amount to in fact? The prince prohibits the worship. The worshippers, supposing such to be their only means of salvation, persist; and they are punished, not for the worship, but for the disobedience; not for the spiritual offence, but for the civil. What was this, but the most common subterfuge of the papal church in its worst ages, practised without mercy upon the many denominations of its heretics; and borrowed from the code, which armed the first Roman persecutors against the "contumacy" of their Christian subjects? The true theory of toleration was indeed directly asserted by Luther, as it had been admitted indirectly by the Pagan emperors and popes. But it was evaded in practice; and the only important difference consisted in the execution.*

That we may understand the extent of this difference, it is proper to confront with the above declarations an edict relating to the same subject, which proceeded about

* It is a question whether even this scanty mercy was not confined to the papal recusants, whether it extended to the Anabaptists, or even to the Sacramentaries. From a passage cited in the next chapter it appears that the Elector treated both these denominations of dissentients with the greatest severity, and that Luther encouraged him in that practice. And from a letter of the latter to W. Link, dated May 12, 1528, he appears to have reasoned on the fortitude, displayed by these sectarians under persecution, just as the Papists used, respecting the constancy of the Albigenses and others of *their* heretics: "I think," says Luther with perfect calmness, "that the constancy of Anabaptists in death (*constantiam Anabaptistarum morientium*) is of the same nature with that which Augustine mentions in the Donatists and Josephus in the Jews, on the destruction of Jerusalem. And there is no doubt that many of such demonstrations are the fury of Satan, especially when those who so die are blasphemers of the sacrament. The holy martyrs, such as *our* Leonard Keyser, suffer with fear and humility, &c. . . . *Multa talia furorem esse Satanæ non est dubium, præsertim ubi sic moriuntur cum blasphemia sacramenti.*" (No. 980.)

the same time from the papal party. In the August of 1527, Ferdinand King of Hungary and Bohemia issued a mandate against the Lutherans and other heretics, to the following effect: "Whosoever shall impugn by speech, preaching, or writing, the godhead or manhood of Christ, or his birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, or the like, shall without mercy be consigned to the flames. Whosoever shall speak disrespectfully of the eternal immaculate Queen the Virgin Mary, or of the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and other beloved Saints of God, or of their service, mediation, or miracles, shall be punished with imprisonment, exile and other inflictions. Whosoever shall change the ancient form or order of baptism, of the mass, or holy unction, or so celebrate the Lord's Supper as to distribute or take both bread and wine, shall be punished as heretics in limb, life and goods, their houses confiscated, &c."

These were accompanied by other equally stringent resolutions, and they were no doubt carried into general effect. The instances of the infliction of death were probably not common. But we read that one Leonard Cæsar, or Keyser, vicar of a parish belonging to the canons of Passau, was burnt, in Bavaria, on the 16th of this same month, for his adherence to the evangelical cause. Luther, in a letter to Michael Stiefel, denounced this act with the utmost power of virtuous and Christian indignation; but he forgot that degradation and exile may sometimes be more bitter than death, and that those sentences were executed under the same circumstances by the chiefs of his own party, and by his own deliberate instigation.

The promotion of education was closely connected with the principles of the Reformation, and its importance was strongly recognised in the "Instructions." In-

somuch that the support of schoolmasters was placed on the same ground with that of the ministers of the churches, and a part of the confiscated revenues was to be appropriated to the one purpose as well as to the other. The religious and intellectual instruction of the children of the lower classes was an object in itself so grand and benevolent, and so mighty in its consequences, as to command a foremost place in the capacious mind of Luther and engage his warm and constant solicitude.

But another portion of the ecclesiastical revenues was assigned to a much more equivocal purpose, when an avenue was opened to the patrons to apply it to their own necessities, and to impoverish the incumbents for the maintenance of themselves and their families. This was indeed a proposal of direct spoliation. It was to divert the property of the church from every object having any pretence to be legitimate, ecclesiastical, religious, charitable, educational, nay even from every public object, and to bestow it, as a boon or a bribe, upon powerful individuals.

Besides the above Instructions, a Book of Doctrines and Ceremonies was published by the Elector at the same time, Jan. 3, 1528. This was composed by Melancthon, but submitted before publication to the correction of Luther, whose alterations were not numerous, and who wrote the Preface. It was divided into eighteen chapters, embracing numerous points of doctrine, morality and discipline, and presenting a summary of the ecclesiastical system then proposed to be established in the Saxon States. It is not necessary to enter into the particular provisions contained in it. In the fifth article the necessity of infant baptism was carefully inculcated. In the eighth the theory of pontifical confession was pronounced impracticable; but the people were admonished

to confess those cases in which the counsel of their pastors might be useful to them. In the tenth, which concerned public worship generally, several festivals in honour of saints were retained, though the people were expressly warned not to pray to such saints even as intercessors, for that their only mediator was Christ. It was declared to be indifferent whether mass were celebrated in Latin or in German, though, whenever the body of the communicants was ignorant of Latin, the latter was recommended. In the thirteenth it was defined, that man by his free will might observe an outward probity and rectitude, and that it was his duty to do so; but that the grace of God by His free gift was required for inward purification. In the thirteenth the people were warned against the abuse of Christian liberty. The sixteenth directed, that notorious sinners should be excluded from the communion of the Eucharist, though they might be admitted to sermons. By the seventeenth, superintendents were appointed to the various districts or dioceses, with power to exhort offenders and represent them to the prefects, and through the prefects to the prince: it was likewise their office to examine candidates for ordination; but this was the extent of their privileges. The eighteenth and last provided for the institution of schools, and inculcated the necessity and usefulness of scholastic institutions.

Two letters written by Luther during the same year (1528) supply a sort of commentary upon the tone of the above instructions. One was addressed (on March 24) to William Pravest, a pastor of Holstadt. "I condemn no ceremonies unless they be repugnant to the Gospel. I preserve all the rest in our church in their integrity. For the baptistery remains; and baptism, though administered in the vulgar tongue, has the same

rites as heretofore. Nay, I permit images in the church, except such as were violently broken before my return. Thus we celebrate mass in the ordinary vestments and with the ancient rites, except that we insert some chants in German, and deliver the words of consecration in the same language. Lastly, I do not wish to abolish the Latin mass; nor would I have permitted it in the vulgar tongue, had I not been compelled.* In fine, there are no people whom I hate more than those, who forcibly abolish free and innocent ceremonies, and in the place of that freedom impose a necessity."

In the other, written on the subject of an Anabaptist chief, Balthasar Hubmaier, who had been burnt at Vienna, after asserting that the Anabaptist erred in condemning everything that proceeded from Rome, the author continued: "I confess that there are many Christian and good things under the papacy, nay, everything that is so, and that has come to us from that quarter, has been retained by us. They had in the papacy the true Scriptures, the true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true absolution, true ministers, true catechism. The Pope knows that we receive all these. We do not reject, as the fanatics do, all that the papists hold, for thus should we reject the assembly of Christ and the temple of God; but only those things do we renounce which the Pope, not contented with the spiritual gifts transmitted to him from the apostles, presumed to add, at the instigation of the devil, by his own authority. Yet God preserved his Christian servants even in that desolation, as He preserved Lot in Sodom (2 Pet. ii. 6, 7). They will say that I am coaxing the Pope. But if he can

* "Denique Missam Latinam nequaquam volo sublatam, nec vernaculam permisisset nisi coactus." Luth. Brief. (No. 962.)

bear such blandishments as this, I will be his obedient son and a good papist, and will revoke everything by which I have offended him.*

“This is the true method of contending against the Pope; lest we wound through his side those true Christians who groan under his tyranny, and, while they adhere to the primary articles of faith, disregard the figments which have been patched upon them. What is required is a prudent and circumspect spirit, which can distinguish between the temple of God and the outhouses which have been added to it by the Pope, so as to leave the former untouched, while it demolishes only the latter.† . . .”

In fact, what is chiefly admirable in the “Book of Doctrines and Ceremonies,” considering the heat of party excitement then prevailing, is its moderation. And this virtue was misinterpreted, as it is wont to be, on two sides. The more violent reformers reproached the nerveless languor and lukewarmness of a document breathing so little of the fiery spirit of Luther, while the papists immediately perceived in it the repentance and recantation of both the chiefs of the Saxon Reformation. They exclaimed with triumph that Luther had abjured most of his errors—that Melancthon was scarcely at all removed from the Catholic faith; and that the advantage promised by this seeming disposition might not be lost,

* “Blandiri me dicent Papæ. Sed si hic hæc blandimenta pati potest, obediens ero filius et bonus papista et revocabo omnia quibus eum offendi.” It was on the strength of these and a few similar expressions, that the papists raised their clamour, in which Erasmus was not ashamed to join, about the concessions and retractations of Luther.

† Apud Seck., lib. ii. t. i. p. 116. It was in this composition that Luther asserted the faith of infants.

Faber wrote directly to the latter, and offered him some office of consequence about the court of Ferdinand, as the price of his apostacy. Melancthon mentioned this fact in a letter to Camerarius ; he then continued : “ This man imagines that I am vacillating, because my book of the Inspection of the Churches is composed with moderation. Yet you will find nothing therein which has not been frequently laid down by Luther. But, because I have said the same things without the same asperity, these acute persons fancy that I dissent from him.” Luther treated those suspicions with mere contempt. “ If,” as he wrote to Spalatin, “ our adversaries make any boast about these statutes of ours, it is a miserable boast, and will not last them long.”

While these affairs were thus proceeding in Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse was no less desirous to place the Reformation in his own dominions on a firm and safe foundation. To this end he applied in 1526 for counsel to Melancthon. The answer of the latter appears to have been written during the first Diet of Spires, and the spirit of his suggestions was the same, which directed him in the establishment of his national church. He advised, That great caution should be used in the abolition of ceremonies ; that private masses should be prohibited, except one on every Sunday and feast-day in each parish ; that all canonical hours, except those celebrated in honour of the saints, should be retained, as well, indeed, as every practice not tainted with idolatry and superstition ; that faith, the fear of God, charity and civil obedience, were to be inculcated by the preachers.

As soon as the Landgrave returned from Spires, he ordered an assembly of his clergy to be held at Homberg on Oct. 21, 1526, for the purpose of a public disputation

on the contested questions. One Francis Lambert, a reformed Franciscan, from the neighbourhood of Avignon, was presented as the evangelical champion, and he proposed twenty-three theses to be defended against all opponents. He was a man of some learning and talents, and of unsuspected morals; and, having resided for some time at Wittemberg, he was not unknown to the chiefs of the party. Two obscure polemics assailed his theses, but with so little success, before an audience probably prejudiced and a prince already decided, that they were glad to escape the consequences of their freedom by a voluntary banishment. The Landgrave then commanded the monks and the nuns to withdraw from their houses, and applied the revenues to the support of the academy of Marburg and the foundation of four hospitals. At the same time he removed the images from the churches and prescribed some regulations for the religious ceremonies.

Many other cities and districts are mentioned, where the Reformation was either planted or perfected during the year 1528—Brandenburg, Goslar, Göttingen, Ulm, Strasburg. And the Elector sent Pomeranus on a commission first to Brunswick, afterwards to Hamburg, to establish a form of government (*Kirchen-ordnung*) among the churches of those places.

During the earlier part of the visitation, in the summer and autumn of 1527, an epidemic disease raged with some violence at Wittemberg. All who were able fled from the place. The whole university, as well as many of the inhabitants, withdrew from the peril and retired for the while to Jena. Of the entire academical and sacerdotal body, Luther, with Pomeranus and their chaplains, alone remained. It was in vain that the Elector frequently exhorted him to provide for his safety; in

vain that the plague penetrated into his very household ; he entreated his sovereign not to remove him from his duties.* At that time John Hess, pastor of Breslau, wrote to consult him, whether it were permitted to retire from an infected place ? He replied that it was not permitted to those who had public duties to discharge there. And fulfilling faithfully his own precept, he continued to perform those imposed upon himself till it pleased Providence to stay the visitation.

* At the same time, in various letters to Spalatin, he frankly confessed that the panic was much greater than the danger : “ *Pestem nostram superat rumor suus longissime ; quod facit fuga ista et metus inauditus nostrorum.* ” “ *Pomeranus et ego hic soli sumus cum Capellanis . . . propter monstrum pavoris istius in vulgo.* ”

CHAPTER XXVI.

SECOND DIET OF SPIRES.

Assembly of the Second Diet of Spire—determination of the papal party—instruction of the Emperor strongly anti-Lutheran and imperious—struggle for the abolition of the Edict of Spire—address of the papal nuncio Mirandola—attempt to divide the reformers, by proscribing the Sacramentaries, with the consent of the Lutherans—controversy between Melancthon and Œcolampadius—greater moderation of the latter—attempt of the free cities to prevent a breach—the Elector hesitates—but the Landgrave decides for union—Luther's reply to the Elector's application for counsel—nevertheless the Catholics repeal the Edict of (1) Spire by a majority—the reformers remonstrate and then protest, whence the designation of Protestant—substance of the decision of the Diet—substance of the protestation—parties who sign it—the papists persevere—and the Protestants appeal—substance of their appeal—publication of the protestation—the papal party, dissatisfied with their success, become earnest in their wish for a general council.

THE states of the empire assembled at Spire (on March 15, 1529) with more than their usual alacrity. The papal party especially mustered all their forces and assumed a warlike and insulting attitude. Never on any like occasion had there appeared so large an assemblage of spiritual nobles; and these more than any betrayed by their looks and manners the malignity of their designs. One or two princes, who had hitherto been considered neutral, or even favourable to the Reformation, now declared against it. Others came attended by considerable escorts of cavalry, breathing hatred and defiance. Nothing less was meditated than the immediate extinction of the heresy by the sword. To this

formidable array of military and ecclesiastical animosity the Elector of Saxony opposed nothing but the peaceful pen of Melancthon, his only attendant at the Diet. And yet neither the spirit which he then manifested, nor his advanced age, nor his undisputed virtues, recommended him to the charity of the papists, who refused to him even the common offices of courtesy, and treated him as if he had fallen under the same excommunication with his detested subject.

The intolerance of the party was confirmed by the Instruction of the Emperor. In this document he complained of the changes in religion, and the disrespect which had been shown to his own authority; for he claimed to be the chief of the Christian world, and demanded unreserved obedience to his decrees. He observed, that the religious innovators whom he had proscribed were daily increasing in numbers, and that too under the pretext of the Edict of Spires (in 1526). He then made known to the Diet that, by virtue of his absolute power, he abrogated that Edict, as in direct opposition to his orders.

The imperious tone of this proclamation, the assumption of a despotic control over the affairs of the empire, which would have annihilated its constitution and the free privileges of its members, offended the pride and independence of the assembled princes; yet not so much as to prevent the anti-Lutheran confederates from endeavouring to turn to their own account so marked an approval of their principles. They overlooked the insult to their prerogatives in the promised attainment of their immediate object, and applied themselves to carry into effect the spirit of the Instruction. Accordingly, their first cry was the same which they had so often raised to so little purpose—the execution of the Edict of Worms. They did not now, probably, expect success;

but it was a common expedient of ecclesiastical policy to fight the first battle at the most distant outworks, and thence to retreat, with some show perhaps of ungraceful concession, to more defensible positions. And so on this occasion the prelates, being immediately overpowered in their first struggle, entrenched themselves in the imperial order. They insisted on the abrogation of the Edict of Spire. The evangelical princes and the deputies of the free cities contended, with equal resolution and more justice, that that Edict had been drawn up according to the usual forms; that the commissioners of the Emperor had consented to it in his name; that it was the legal act of the whole body of the republic; and that it was beyond the imperial authority to annul it.

The discussions which arose on this subject were interrupted by the arrival of the pontifical nuncio, John Thomas of Mirandola. In his official address to the Diet he urged the necessity of concord during the actual pressure and progress of the Turkish arms. He deplored the divisions of Christendom and the increase of the heresies which deformed it. And while, in general terms, he exhorted the faithful to persevere and the apostates to repent, he alluded to the council, so earnestly desired and so repeatedly demanded, in expressions not at all calculated to nourish the hopes, or win the confidence, of the German princes. For even in the fury of party strife, the Hundred Grievances of Nuremberg were not yet forgotten; and there were none, at least among the secular princes, such eager advocates of the prerogatives of Rome, as to be wholly unmindful of the wrongs and the burdens which she had never ceased to inflict on them.

As it was not easy to overthrow the reformers, so long as they continued to act together with cordiality, a very dangerous attempt was next made to divide them.

Faber, Bishop of Vienna, and the celebrated Eck, exerted considerable influence at this Diet, and suggested the craftiest counsels to the Catholic princes. We have not yet pursued the sacramentarian controversy into any of its details; but enough has been said to prove, that a very serious difference existed in the evangelical camp on the subject of the Eucharist; that that difference was considered important by both parties, and by one of them essential; and that the schism had been made wider and more notorious by the violent intolerance of Luther. The seeds of dissension were thus sown, and the moment was not unfavourable to mature them.

The scheme of the papal party was to direct their main attack against the Sacramentaries; to defame and blacken them by every form of vituperation; to turn to their destruction the arms which had been furnished by Luther himself; to incite against them even the adherents of Luther; and finally to overwhelm them by an edict of proscription. They began to say that the Lutherans might possibly be tolerated; that, with all their errors, they had refrained at least from one species of blasphemy—they had spared the body and blood of Christ; that they had even displayed their just detestation of a tenet which removed them farther from the Sacramentaries on the one side, than their errors separated from the Catholics on the other; that they might indeed hope for reconciliation with the church, provided they would unite in denouncing the far more abominable heresy of their brother sectarians.

These artful suggestions were indeed more calculated to influence the passions of the theologians, than the policy of the princes; yet could they scarcely fail to do some mischief. Should they succeed in dividing the parties, they would open the best imaginable prospect for

the destruction of both ; and should they not, they would at least subject the Lutherans to some share in that fiercer clamour, now especially levelled against the bolder and more obnoxious schismatics.

Again, during this very crisis, a controversy was proceeding between Melancthon and Œcolampadius, respecting the disputed doctrine. On hearing the rumour of the intended proscription of his party, the latter wrote from Basle (March 31, 1529) a letter abounding in expressions of personal consideration, and desire for the general harmony and co-operation of all the friends of the Gospel. Melancthon replied from Spire, that he too was no less the friend of concord ; that hitherto he had taken no part in the controversy in question, nor written one syllable on the subject ; that he had been a spectator rather than an actor in that drama ; and that he had many grave reasons for having refused to mingle in so odious a strife. Then, after this sage exordium, he entered at some length into the theological argument ; and, after again deploring the difference, suggested that a few good men of both parties should meet in conference, to reconcile it. Œcolampadius replied. The argument was conducted with much ingenuity, and the victory, as is usual in such matters, was claimed by both. But as to the spirit, in which this little episode in the controversy was conducted, we may observe this distinction—while Melancthon hastily published his letter, both in Latin and German, and appeared impatient for the applause and triumph of his party, the other more magnanimously suppressed his reply,* on the ground that it was more conducive to the concord, so essential to both, to throw the veil of secrecy over their unhappy and unseasonable disputes.

* He did not publish it till after the conference of Marburg.

Meanwhile the free cities, some of which* were less decidedly addicted to Luther's sacramental opinion, were urgent in their endeavours to prevent a breach. To this end they represented to the princes with perfect justice: That this was a palpable artifice of their common enemy; that their safety depended on their union; that that union was founded in a general agreement on Essentials; that their difference respected one doctrine only; that even on that they were agreed, as to the only important point, since they alike admitted the presence of Christ, though they differed as to the manner of His presence; that they both recognised the Gospel as the only rule of faith; that the Reformation was established on the same principles and by the same authority in the cities, as under the princes; that the caresses, which the papists now offered to the latter, were insincere and dangerous, and supplied only an additional motive for concord; that their common enterprise had received the sanction of the former Diet of Spires; and that they were bound

* Seckendorf, lib. ii. sect. 14. § 44. Pallavicino (lib. ii. cap. xviii.) remarks, that, as the heresy of Luther was born under a prince, so it affected some mixture of notions favourable to monarchy; while that of Zwingli, having originated in a republic, was addressed to the popular inclination for liberty. "And in conformity with this, we observe," he continues, "that in this Diet all the princes were on the side of Luther, and many of the free cities followed Zwingli." It does not appear that any of the free cities declared themselves believers in the doctrine of the Sacramentaries, though they were not prepared, any more than the Landgrave, to break off all communion with the others on account of that doctrine. But I do not see how this wise resolution was connected with their form of government. "L'eresia di Martino era nata sotto un principe; e a fin d'inescolarlo s'era seminata con mistura di concetti più vantaggiosi al dominio d'un solo. La, dove quella di Zwinglio originata in un governo popolare erasi nelle prediche e negli scritti de' suoi con altri sentimenti, gradevoli alla libertà del popolo," &c.

to prevent by their united exertions the abrogation of its decree.

The Landgrave, with his usual decision, instantly assented to these truths, and exerted all his power to prevent a rupture. The Elector, whether through a defect in political sagacity or through the influence of religious scruples, suspended his determination, until he should learn the opinion of Luther. But the other princes, not being equally bigotted to the responses of that doctor, resolved at once to maintain their connexion with the Sacramentaries, and rejected the proposition of condemning them. The reasons which they gave for this wise determination were these : That notwithstanding the grand error of that party, it had not yet exhibited the spirit of obstinacy and schism which properly constitutes heresy ; that the subject of difference had not yet undergone a perfect discussion, and ought to be referred to the decision of the future council ; that the accused should at least be heard before they were condemned ; that proscription would only render them desperate, and give occasion to violence and calamity.

These reasons were devised with more ingenuity than boldness. They did not disclose the real cause of the resolution which they professed to justify, but placed its defence on ecclesiastical principles, recognised by their adversaries, and on political expediency. The first, indeed, embodied one of the favourite maxims of the church ; none of them expressed any indulgence towards the error of the Sacramentaries, nor any determination to persist, should that error continue, in retaining them in communion.

It was well that those pious and prudent men did not suspend their judgment in deference to the name of Luther. His reply to the Elector's communication, de-

manding his counsel on that as well as on other matters, was suggested by a different spirit. In that document he spoke generally of the rottenness of the ecclesiastical abuses which prevailed, till his hand seized and shook them in pieces. He assumed credit for having always preached, among other Christian doctrines, obedience to the civil authorities ;—but for his injunctions the people would have carried their revolt against their spiritual oppressors into universal disorder, ending in atheism. He argued, that the Elector could not have prevented the Reformation even had he so desired ; he gave many reasons why an edict, violating the rights of conscience, should be resisted : but in respect to the Sacramentaries and Anabaptists, whom he comprehended without distinction in the same category, he counselled his master to obey the determination of the Diet, to execute whatever might be enacted against them, and to persist in the great severity with which he had hitherto treated them.*

This insidious attempt having failed, the Roman Catholics proceeded to try their strength with their united adversaries. On the 4th of April they proposed the repeal of the edict of Spire, and the majority decided in their favour. The Reformers persisted in their remonstrances ; and, what deserves especial notice, they defended their resistance chiefly by the grand distinction, now indeed familiar to all men, but then for the first time broached as a principle of government, between a temporal and a spiritual obedience. Had the resolutions of the Diet, they argued, concerned nothing more than their secular interests, they would have cheerfully submitted. But since it touched their conscience, and that

* “ Reliquis Decreti capitibus contra Anabaptistas et Sacramentarios parendum est, et hucusque adversus errores illos in provinciis suis cum omni severitate ab Electore actum fuit.”—Apud Seckend., l. ii., sect. 14, § 44, addit.

sacred right of private judgment which every man carried in his own bosom, they represented the impossibility of obedience. They urged besides, that to cancel the unanimous declaration of one Diet by a mere majority in another, was contrary to the constant practice of the States of the empire.

Notwithstanding, Ferdinand and the papists, in the confidence of their numerical superiority, which was further proved by a second trial of strength on the 12th, after some other vain attempts to divide their opponents, demanded their unconditional submission to the decision of the assembly. This was on the 19th of April, 1529. The Reformers *protested*; and, as that simple act was disregarded, they presented on the following day in writing that second and more elaborate remonstrance, whence they received the designation of Protestants.

Yet the decision of the Diet, as embodied in its edict,* was more moderate than the Reformers probably expected, or than the ecclesiastical faction desired. Ferdinand was perhaps perplexed by the firmness of his opponents; he had certainly personal reasons for avoiding extremities. His dominions were invaded by the Turks and the safety of his sceptre menaced. Thus once more was it his nearest object to obtain supplies of money or men from the German States, and of this there

* This edict (as Melancthon mentions in a letter of the 7th of May following) finally passed the Diet on the 23rd of April, though it was not published till the 6th of May; but of course its contents had been discussed in the previous deliberations of the Assembly; and thus we may easily account for the circumstance, at first sight singular, that the date of the protest (April 19) is earlier than that of the Decree protested against. No doubt, one object of the Reformers, in thus anticipating the concluding act of the Diet, was to prevent the ratification of the edict. It is therefore unnecessary to adopt the suggestion of Courayer, (note 74, on lib. i. of Fra Paolo Sarpi *Istor. Concil. Trident.*), who, on the single authority of the continuator of Fleury, would substitute (April) 13 for 23.

could be no hope should he embroil them in a civil war. Moreover, the contest between Charles and Francis was not yet concluded, and the latter had already begun to turn his views towards an alliance with the German Reformers. These circumstances doubtless had their weight in influencing both the matter and spirit of a document, so much more temperate than the imperial instructions under which the assembly commenced its deliberations.

The following were its most important provisions. These States, in which the Edict of Worms had already been executed, were commanded to persevere in enforcing it, of course to the exclusion of the evangelical doctrines. In respect to the others, they were permitted to retain such of their innovations as could not be abolished without popular disorders, until the meeting of a general or national council; meanwhile they were prohibited from introducing any others. The Eucharistical doctrine opposed to the real presence was condemned and its promulgation forbidden, but without any express mention of the Sacramentaries. The mass was to be maintained where it existed, and to be restored where it had been abolished, for the service of those who might prefer that form. "The lately arisen error and sect" of the Anabaptists was proscribed, according to the tenor of the imperial edict issued against them on the same day, and thereby confirmed by the Diet. The Gospel was to be preached according to the interpretation of the church and without allusion to contested doctrines; and peace and religious harmony were recommended to all the States of the empire.

Such were the enactments against which the memorable protestation was directed—a document founded on the principle, that every man possessed the right of judging for himself in matters of religion, and that the conscience was amenable to no authority but that of

God. The Reformers pleaded at some length to this effect:—That the cause of the various troubles which afflicted the empire was not to be found in the opinions of the Lutherans, but in the notorious abuses of the church, which even a pope had confessed and avowed; that as they, the Protestants, presumed not in any manner to interfere with the religious concerns of others, so they might justly claim the same independence for themselves; that the pontifical mass had been proved by irrefragable argument to be contrary to the word of God, and therefore that they could not without impiety restore it in their States; that in respect to the doctrine of the real presence, they were not disposed to issue any decree against any who might think differently, at least until their arguments had been fairly heard and controverted; that the highest authority for the interpretation of Scripture was Scripture, the clearer passages being employed for the elucidation of the more obscure—since the word church was somewhat equivocal, owing to the difficulty of ascertaining which was the true church; that human tradition rested on no certain foundation; that the unanimous Edict of Spires, which they were called upon to cancel, did no more than protect the members of the empire in the worship of God, according to what might seem to each its purity, and was really an instrument of peace and concord; that the Edict of Worms had been made a means of oppression and confiscation by the princes who adopted it; that for these reasons they dissented from the proposed decree, and were ready to render account of that proceeding to all men, the Emperor not excepted; meanwhile, until a general or national council should be assembled, that they would abstain from every act which might give reasonable ground for offence.*

* Sleidan, lib. vi., fol. 101.

This manifesto bore the signatures of six princes and of the deputies of fourteen imperial cities. The former were the Elector of Saxony, George of Brandenburg, Ernest and Francis of Lunenberg, Wolfgang of Anhalt, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. The cities were Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Lindau, Memmingen, Kempten, Nordlingen, Heilbrun, Reutlingen, Isne, Weissemburg, Winsheim, and St. Gal. If the power of some of these was very inconsiderable, their boldness was the more remarkable, and the moral effect of such intrepid adherence to a popular principle was not lost upon the adversary. Inferiority in numbers was supplied by deeply-rooted determination; and the zeal of interest, or profession, or prejudice, or loyalty towards a venerable ancestral institution, was foiled by that earnest inflexible spirit, which proceeded from a strong sense of right and justice, and the predominance of conscientious convictions, irresistible when they are founded in religion.

However, the papists were firm. They rejected the protestation, and two days afterwards (April 22) they again called upon the minority to adhere to the resolutions which had been voted. On the 24th it appears that Ferdinand expressed his willingness to receive the document, but insisted that its authors should not publish it. This was at once refused; and on the following day, the recess being now irrevocably passed and proclaimed, the Reformers issued a second manifesto, on the same principles and in the same tone with the first, but under a different form. It was an "Appeal" from the decision of the Diet to the Emperor, or to a Christian and free or national council, or to *any* competent judge.

The appeal was in behalf of "themselves and their subjects, and all those who either then adhered to the holy word of God, or who might do so at any future time." And in the same spirit of universal sympathy

and communion with all that was just and holy they proceeded to call God to witness, "that their intention was no other than to further the honour of God and His most holy word, and the salvation of themselves and of others; and that they were neither doing nor designing anything except to pay, without wrong to any one, the debt which they owed to their controlling conscience and to their God. All these were by nature connected one with another; and, as in worldly perils it was permitted to any one to interfere for the preservation of his neighbour, how much greater right had those, who were members of the one spiritual body of Christ Jesus, and children of the one heavenly Father, and were thus spiritually brothers, to be watchful and provident with every legitimate remedy to save both themselves and their neighbours, in that mighty concern which involved their everlasting condition!" They then referred to their protestation and touched again on various matters which had been treated in it—the Edict of Worms, the restoration of the papal mass, and above all the abrogation of the Edict of Spires of 1526; and, after referring to some subsequent proceedings of the Diet, they solemnly interposed their appeal.

Having given this last proof of their unflinching constancy, they departed to their several states and cities. The protestation was immediately printed and published, by the Landgrave on the 5th, by the Elector on the 13th of the following May; and then they consulted as to the best means of approaching the Emperor and obtaining for their acts and their cause that respectful attention, which on so many accounts they deserved.

Meanwhile, the opposite party had no great reason to exult in their triumph, if such indeed it could be accounted. And they perceived this so clearly, that when the ambassadors of Charles transmitted to him an ac-

count of the proceedings of the Diet they accompanied it with this advice, that he should immediately procure the convocation of a free council in Germany; that, should the Pope refuse, he should himself convoke it; and that he should be present and preside over it. After so many trials of strength, with such unsatisfactory results, it was now manifest to all, who were not quite blinded by professional or party bigotry, that the principles of Luther could not be put down, either by mere irrational force, or even by the decisions of universities, or of majorities in partial though dignified assemblies. The demands of that party had so much show of justice, their opinions were so popular and so deeply fixed wherever they had taken root, that nothing less than the condemnation of the highest Christian or national tribunal could have shaken them. If the sword were to be the final arbiter, even the sword could only have succeeded by contending, not as the implement of ecclesiastical or even imperial vengeance, but in execution of the solemn, deliberate, impartial sentence of the representatives of the Christian community.

There were some too, even among the papal princes, who had other motives for desiring a council. They expected some benefit to themselves or to their subjects from its labours; they looked forward to it as a constitutional instrument for the abolition of those manifold grievances which they suffered in common with their Protestant brethren, and against which so many weary remonstrances had been reiterated in vain.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND.—ZURICH.


Birth[†] and education of Zwingli—his earliest professional employment at Glarus—Einsiedlen—his promotion to the collegiate church at Zurich—Bernhard Samson and his indulgences—opposed for what reason by the Bishop of Constance, and by Zwingli—repulsed from Zurich—correspondence between the Zurichers and Leo X.—the first lectures of Zwingli purely evangelical—his belief in the doctrine of justification by faith—first decree of the senate of Zurich—dispute on the use of meats—Zwingli's apprehensions and firmness—he resigns a salary received from Rome—he advocates the cause, and recommends the writings of Luther—opposition of the Bishop, through the agency of Faber—defence of Zwingli—the Bishop appeals to the national assembly at Baden—opposition of the monks—disregarded by the senate—Zwingli's religious confidence—he convinces Lambert in public disputation—reasons which occasioned the convocation of the synod of January, 1523—no opponent appearing, the senate decree in favour of the Reformation—Zwingli's sixty-seven articles—and elucidation of them—his book on the canon of the mass—the second synod of Zurich in September, 1523—account of its proceedings—two subjects proposed for disputation—no Catholics appear—decree of the synod—and consequent proceeding of the Zurichers.

ULRIC ZWINGLI was born in an obscure village in the district of Tokenburg, named Wildenhaus, situated among the summits of the loftiest mountains, and ennobled only by the fortune which made it the birth-place of a great man. The time of his nativity is disputed, but Gerdesius confidently fixes it on January 1, 1484,* rather less than two months after that

* Zwingli, writing to Vadianus on September 17, 1531, mentions himself as in his forty-eighth year.

of Luther. His family was ancient and respectable. The most careful attention was paid to his education, which is traced indeed to his very infancy. Till the age of ten he was under the care of his uncle, a dean; then he passed under the tuition of one Gregory Bingli, master of an elementary school at Basle; and even at that early period there are records of the astonishing promises of his genius. The rudiments of literature he received from Henry Lupulus, a scholar of reputation in those days, at Bern. Thence he was removed to Vienna, in Austria, where he pursued for two years his studies in philosophy; and thence he returned to Basle, and commenced a course of theological instruction under the celebrated Thomas Wittenbach. From this last master, of whom he never spoke without reverence, he learnt, by his own confession—what Luther about the same time learnt from Staupitz—the great doctrine of justification by faith. And we are likewise assured by Leo Judæ, his friend and fellow-student, that their intelligent preceptor being well versed in scriptural lore, and not blind to the ecclesiastical corruptions, among which the foremost place was invariably yielded to the system of papal indulgences, distinctly indicated to them many of those truths afterwards so loudly proclaimed, and impressed into their minds the rudiments of those great principles which directed and distinguished their lives.

From the same master they received too, as was customary and necessary, some instructions in the scholastic system of ratiocination; but both presently forsook it, with no other regret than for the time which had been spent so fruitlessly. “We have good reason,” so Zwingle wrote in 1523 to his ancient preceptor, “to pity each other for our useless application to the vain subtleties of the school. But do not distrust yourself on my account:



it is the evil of the age. Our repentance, however, may have this use: it may serve as a motive and example for those, who have any elevation and freedom of mind, not to trifle about things which we have abandoned, with a joy only mingled with regret that we did not abandon them sooner."

As a relaxation from his severer studies, Zwingle, like Luther, applied to the science and performance of music; and this with so much success, and while he was yet very young, as to attract the admiration of certain Dominicans, who were desirous that he should enter into their order, and adorn it by the exertion of *that* talent. Erasmus had been recommended by the sweetness of his voice to like solicitations; but Zwingle was preserved by the good sense of his father and uncle, who were preparing him for a very different field of distinction.

He was ordained by the Bishop of Constance in 1506, and obtained a preachship in the city of Glarus. There he remained for ten years, faithfully discharging his professional duties, not only by his sermons, but by occasional public disputations. During this space, his chief devotion was to the epistles of St. Paul, which he transcribed from the original Greek with his own hand, together with various comments collected from the writings of the fathers and committed to his faithful memory. He also composed some theological commonplaces, in which he collected the opinions of the fathers, respecting the principal articles of faith. At the same time he pursued his studies in profane literature with great ardour, neglecting neither the Greek nor the Latin writers, in poetry or in prose; and as a sort of link between the past and the future—between the meditations of his youth and the actions of his riper years—he devoured, as they successively appeared, the writings of

Erasmus. Such was the discipline by which he fortified his hardy mind for the struggles to come, and such the stores that he was diligently laying up for the use of his after life: but it is not clear that he yet projected any of the achievements which Providence had ordained for him. For though some affirm, that even at that time he did not altogether refrain from censures on the papal superstitions, so that some Reformers, who afterwards arose in that district, may have derived their maturer principles from the seeds which he scattered there, yet in speaking in later days of his own evangelical labours, he did not date their commencement until after his departure from Glarus.*

This took place in 1516. In the autumn of that year he was invited by the governors of the Benedictine monastery of Einsiedlen (called the desert of Switzerland) to undertake the office of pastor and preacher in the church of the Virgo Eremitana (the Virgin of the Hermitage), much celebrated throughout that country and the whole of Upper Germany, and continually crowded with credulous devotees. In this seclusion he continued his studies and improved his knowledge, especially that of the Greek language. He presently acquired the confidence of several learned and liberal persons whom he found residing there, admirers of Reuchlin and Erasmus, and destined in due season to become readers of Luther likewise. He endeavoured besides to amend the spiritual condition of the people committed to his charge. He

* “*Cœpi ego evangelium prædicare anno salutis 1516, eo scilicet tempore cum Lutheri nomen in nostris regionibus ne auditum quidem adhuc erat.*”—*Opus*, tom. i., p. 37. It is to be observed too, that in this passage he was endeavouring to place the beginning of his preaching at as early a date as he could consistently with truth. Myconius remarks that during his residence at Glarus he confined himself to gospel-preaching, and abstained, or nearly so, from touching the ecclesiastical abuses. !

strove to lead them away from the worship of images to faith in Christ; from human inventions and traditions to the doctrine of the Gospel. He even addressed to the Bishop of Constance and the Cardinal of Sitten certain admonitory epistles, entreating them to employ their authority for the reformation of their respective churches; and so great already was his credit, that those prelates were not offended by the boldness of his remonstrances. He remained at Einsiedlen rather more than two years; and then, at the close of 1518, he was summoned to the great and final field of his exertions: he was appointed preacher in the collegiate church at Zurich.

The crisis of his appearance on this scene was so extraordinary, as to indicate to every devout mind a providential dispensation, designed to raise up a second instrument in the work of reformation, and that, almost by the same means which had been employed to produce the first.

One Bernhard Samson, or Sanson, a native of Milan, and a Franciscan monk, selected this moment to open a sale of indulgences at Zurich. He was the Tetzels of Switzerland. He preached through many of its provinces, exercising the same trade, with the same blasphemous pretensions and the same clamorous effrontery; and in a land of greater political freedom his impostures excited even a deeper and more general disgust. The grand religious dogma, which had peculiarly excited Luther against that barter, was as strongly, though less violently, impressed upon the belief of Zwingle; who, during the preceding summer, had already preluded with some occasional declamations against the office and person of Samson. Meanwhile that commissioner was advancing from the Italian Alps with his long procession of attendants, and practising the usual pompous impositions in Lucerne, Ury, Bern, and other cantons.

He reaped some profits, and he sustained no reverse : he encountered no opposition till he arrived at Zurich.

But here appears a circumstance which throws a shade of distinction between the almost parallel histories of Samson and Tetzl. The latter observed in his ministration all the necessary ecclesiastical forms ; the former omitted to present his credentials to the bishop of the diocese, and acted solely on the authority of the pontifical bulls. Hugo, Bishop of Constance, was offended at this disrespectful temerity, and immediately directed Zwingle and the other pastors to exclude the stranger from their churches. The first who had occasion to show obedience to this mandate was John Frey, minister of Stauffberg. Bullinger, Dean of Bremgarten, was the second. From Bremgarten, after a severe altercation which ended by the excommunication of that dignitary, Samson proceeded to Zurich. Meanwhile Zwingle had been engaged for about two months* in rousing the indignation of the people against the same object ; and so successfully did he support the instruction of the Bishop, and such efficacy was added to his eloquence by the personal unpopularity of Samson, that the senate determined not so much as to admit him within the gates of the city. A deputation of honour was appointed to welcome the pontifical legate without the walls. He was then commanded to absolve the Dean from the sentence launched against him, and to depart from the canton. He obeyed, and presently turned his steps towards Italy, and repassed the mountains. This took place at the end of February, 1519.

The Zurichers immediately addressed a strong remonstrance to the Pope, in which they denounced the misconduct of his agent. Leo replied, on the last of April, with characteristic mildness ; for though he main-

* It was on January 1, 1519, that Zwingle first preached in the cathedral.

tained, as might be expected, the Pope's authority to grant those indulgences, and enjoined the most unequivocal obedience to that church and see "which permits not error," yet he accorded the prayer of the petition so far as to recal the preacher, and to promise his punishment, should he be convicted of having exceeded his commission. When it is considered, that this answer was addressed to men who had already ejected his legate and insulted his bulls, it may be inferred that Leo was confirmed in his moderate view of these transactions by the experience of the Saxon insurrection, and that he hoped to prevent the progress of this second flame by the timely and decorous concession of the most obnoxious scandals. Still as the concession was the consequence of resistance, it was accounted as a triumph by the Zurichers; who, notwithstanding the general claims asserted in the bull, deemed themselves, as indeed they were, liberated for ever from the degrading impost. But what is strange in this affair is, that no one was louder in assailing the vendors of the indulgences and the abuse of the practice, than John Faber, Vicar of the Bishop of Constance, then the friend of Zwingle, afterwards one of the most persevering foes of the Reformation. It is also deserving of record, that that prelate was not contented to co-operate with the indignation of the people in excluding the impostor, but also wrote to Zwingle, exhorting him to accomplish with boldness the work which he had begun, and promising to assist him with his faithful support.*

* "Hugo Constantiensis Episcopus . . . literas ad me dedit per vicarium suum Johannem Fabrum, A.D. 1519, quibus hortabatur ut quod coeptum erat fortiter exequi pergerem, se enim mihi bona fide affuturum—nisi ipsius vicarii chirographum, quod etiamnum penes me est, adulterinum sit et inscio Episcopo ad me transmissum. Quid hic facerem? Annon Episcopo Constantiensi obedirem?"—Zwingly Opera. Responsio ad Valentinum Comparem, apud Gerdes. tom. i. p. 262.

But Zwingle's views were not such as long to be approved by an episcopal reformer in that church. Encouraged by this applause he began to invite the Bishop, both by public and private solicitations, with perfect respect but great earnestness, to give his adhesion to the evangelical truth, which no devices or exertions could now avail to stifle, and to permit the free preaching of the gospel throughout his diocese.

"I know not," says Zwingle, in his own account of this affair, "wherefore matters were changed ; but I do know that those, who incited me with repeated exhortations at the beginning of my course, presently ceased to honour me with any reply, with any communication whatsoever, except indeed certain public and general documents, which bore as much resemblance to their former counsels as a fly to an elephant ; for the Vicar, in the first instance, expressly assured me, both by word of mouth and by letter, that his Bishop could no longer endure the insolence and unjust arrogance of the Roman Pontiff.

"Again ; Antonio Pucci, legate of the Pope, conferred with me four times on this subject, and made me many splendid promises. I for my part told him very freely what ought to be done. I told him too, that from that time forward I should devote myself, by the divine grace, to the preaching of the Word, as the effectual means of shaking the power of the papacy. . . . Yet no result followed from these admonitions."

Zwingle, even in that early stage of his proceedings, was not so ill acquainted with the spirit of the papal hierarchy as to expect any honest assistance from that quarter : and thus, though willing to hail any glimpse of light that might break upon him even from the prelacy of Rome, he placed his true reliance on much safer ground. From the beginning of his preaching at

Zurich it was his twofold object to instruct the people in the meaning, design, and character of the scriptural writings; and at the same time to teach them to seek their religion only there. His very first proceeding was to substitute the gospel of St. Matthew, as the text-book of his discourses, for the scraps of Scripture exclusively treated by the papal preachers; and he pursued this purpose by next illustrating the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles of Paul and Peter. He considered the doctrine of justification by faith as the corner-stone of Christianity, and he strove to draw away his hearers from the gross observances of a pharisaical church to a more spiritual conception of the covenant of their redemption. He assailed, with the power of a severe eloquence, every form of vice and immorality. The most frequent subjects of his denunciations were hypocrisy and superstition; but he spared neither luxury nor idleness, nor intemperance, nor any description of debauchery; and he enforced his admonitions, not only with courage and learning far surpassing those of any contemporary compatriot, but with the still stronger recommendation of a high and unsullied reputation.* His success was so considerable, that at the end of 1519 he numbered as many as two thousand disciples; and

* Zwingli is described as of a pleasant and affable temper, and of a countenance agreeable beyond expression:—"Ingenio amoenus et ore jucundus supra quam dici possit erat."—Osw. Myconius, *Vita Zwingli*. His early youth has not escaped the charge of occasional licentiousness. His own explanation on this subject, in his "*Responsio ad Valentinum Comparum*," is candid and manly:—"Peccatorem equidem magnum me esse non inficior; turpiter vero et flagitiose nunquam vixi, ne tunc quidem cum annis essem junior. . . . Nolim tamen licita quædam gaudia et animi oblectationes honestas, quibus et musicæ studium ad numero, quisquam mihi fraudi vertat, tum et alia quædam juvenili ætati cognata; quæ tamen ipsa per divinam clementiam (exceptis solis musicæ studiis) in hanc usque ætatem mihi non adhæserunt." This was written in 1525.

his influence so powerful among the chiefs of the commonwealth, that he procured, in the following year, an official decree to the effect: That all pastors and ministers should thenceforward reject the unfaithful devices and ordinances of men, and teach with freedom such doctrines only as rested on the authority of the prophecies, gospels, and apostolical epistles.

In the course of that year (1520), the effect produced upon the lower classes by his writing and preaching first displayed itself. Being taught by him, that their liberty as Christians dispensed with all distinctions of meats, they presently showed a disposition to enjoy that freedom. The Bishop of Constance instantly issued an edict, and by his agents exhorted the people to remain in their adhesion to the church, at least till after the decision of a council. Zwingli defended his positions, and the inhabitants entreated the Bishop to convoke a synod for the decision of the disputed questions.

The storm was now rising; and he who had excited it, and perceived its increasing fury, was not without apprehension that its course might be turned against himself; but he prepared to confront it with a firm and fearless soul. "In respect to myself," as he wrote to Oswald Myconius, "I stand like a man devoted, expecting all evils from all, whether clergy or laity, only beseeching Christ that He will give me a manly spirit for all endurance, and break or preserve his vessel, as may please Him best. If I shall be excommunicated, I shall be mindful of Hilary, a most learned and pious man, who was exiled from Gaul into Africa; and of Lucius, who was restored with honour to the Roman see, whence he had been expelled. Not that I am comparable to them, but I am consoled that men so far better than myself have suffered such miserable indignities. If I should venture to make any boast, it would

be of the joy with which I would endure outrage for the name of Christ." *

These were no more than the calm effusions of a mind prepared to proceed inflexibly, and in defiance of all danger, on its destined purpose; and in proof of this sincerity—in proof, at least, that he could make some sacrifice of personal interest for his cause—he resigned about the same time a pension which he received from Rome for the purchase of books. He had been admitted by Leo into the number of the acolyth † chaplains of the see; but as soon as his principles were so established as to place him in direct opposition to that see, he justly deemed it dishonourable to receive from it any further gratuity. "Formerly," he thus wrote in 1522, "I thought myself permitted to enjoy the liberality of the Pope, so long as I could maintain with a pure and pious conscience his religion and doctrines; but after the knowledge of the sin had grown up in me, I renounced for ever both the Pontiff and his presents."

During the period when the threat of excommunication was suspended over Luther, Zwingli exerted his humble endeavours to prevent the blow. He warned the Pope's commissary at Zurich of the impolicy of the

* Zwingli believed, like Luther, and perhaps with more truth than Luther, that he was by nature disposed to peace:—"Thou knowest, oh most holy Jesus, how the ears of thy people are stunned by brawlers, sycophants, hunters after lucre. Thou knowest how from my childhood I have hated disputes; yet in spite of myself thou hast perpetually dragged me into battle. . . . Wherefore I appeal with confidence unto Thee, that what thou hast begun thou mayest accomplish. . . ."

† "Acolythi sedis apostolicæ octo ordinarii, qui, cum pontifex apud lectum pavamenti et similiter in Ecclesia est celebraturus et induitur sacris vestibus, circumstant genuflexi et ornamenta subministrant diaconis cardinalibus."—Du Cange in Glossario. It should be mentioned that Zwingli was for some time attached to the political party of the Pope, in opposition to that of France; and that he actually served on that side in Italy in 1515, and was present at the battle of Marignan.

proceeding, and truly foretold the effect of the anathema upon the German people—to raise the influence of the martyr, and to bring into contempt the authority of the see. He expressed, without any shadow of jealousy, his admiration for the deeds and character of his more celebrated fellow-labourer, and recommended the study of some of his writings from the pulpit.

In 1522 the new doctrines had made such progress at Zurich, as not only to rouse the Bishop to a second interference, but also to move the apprehensions of the monks. The former made his great appeal to the senate, and laid before that body the various complaints which he had received respecting Zwingle. He likewise twice addressed the college of canons, of which Zwingle was elected a member in the preceding year. He warned them at great length against the seditious and destructive teachers who were disturbing the repose of the church. On the first of these occasions he deputed Faber, with two or three others, to substantiate his assertions. Zwingle, and two other evangelical pastors, were placed on their defence before the Council of Two Hundred; and this was the first of several encounters which took place between those two polemics. To the various accusations of the Bishop, Zwingle replied: That there was not anywhere a more orderly congregation than his own, so far was he from propounding any seditious doctrines; that the popish ceremonies, more cumbrous than those of Judaism, were indeed no longer endurable, and must now be shaken off; but that, in preaching this necessity, he had never countenanced any general disobedience to human statutes; that he intended no separation from the church of Christ; and that he was ready to render account of his gospel-preaching before heaven and earth and hell. Moreover, on the 16th of April in the same year he published a book “Con-

cerning the choice and free eating of meats," and the body of the citizens seem to have favoured his principles; but the senate issued a temporising decree in faint support of the established practices in those matters, and the Bishop, of course, persisted in opposing all innovation. Zwingle and his colleagues then addressed, on July 22, a respectful petition to the latter, entreating him not to promulgate any ordinance injurious to the gospel, nor any longer to tolerate fornication, or to enforce the celibacy of the clergy.

In reply to the Bishop's second remonstrance to the canons, Zwingle wrote, on August 23, a tract which appears in his works under the title of "*Architetes*,"* composed with much gravity and earnestness, and directed, for the most part, against the intolerable burden of the ceremonial law of Rome. The Bishop, now distrusting his own power to repress the insubordination, poured out his grievances to the national assembly held at Baden, and claimed for the execution of his decrees the protection of the entire Helvetic body. This appeal ended in the persecution of a single and a humble delinquent. One Urban Wys, pastor of Wiflitzbach, a village near Baden, was seized on suspicion of being addicted to the new opinions, and delivered up to the prelate; and a long imprisonment which he underwent at Constance has dignified him with the distinction of being the first martyr of the Swiss Reformation.

There were three orders of monks in the city of Zurich. These formed a confederacy against Zwingle,

* Zwingle appealed in this work to the Bishop's knowledge of his character and principles:—"Quod ad nos attinet, nihil opus te vocare testem quo jam animo quæque faciam; ipse enim nosti quam longinque a teneris abfuerim ab omni dissensione et tumultu; nec tamen destiteris ad id muneris invitum et reclamantem trahere; quamobrem te nunc merito adpello, ut bonum opus quod cœpisti perficias. . . ."

and charged him before the senate with having brought them into contempt by his sermons. They petitioned the authorities to silence his preaching, or at least to repeal so much of the edict of 1520 as would allow them to derive their discourses from Aquinas and Scotus. The senate was deaf to their remonstrances, and Zwingli was in this respect more fortunate than Luther—that he could place a more certain dependence on the constancy of the civil government.

Yet his language in a letter to Myconius, written during this year, proves that he was not unshaken by these various obstacles; and likewise that he placed not his confidence in the support of the senate, or any other human agency:—"The assaults are so frequent, the blows so vehement, by which they are striving to overthrow the House of God, that one might reasonably take them not for common tempests, but for hail and thunderbolts; and unless I had clearly seen that it is God which guards the commonwealth, I should long ago have abandoned the helm; but when I behold Him tending the ropes and sails, nay even commanding the very winds, and they obey, I should be slothful and unworthy of the name of man, if I should desert my station and perish—for I should perish, notwithstanding, with ignominy. Wherefore I consign myself to His mercy, &c. . ." The same was the source whence Luther was deriving, under similar perplexities, the same consolation; and in the greater force and fire, with which he gave expression to the same principles and feelings, we read one among many proofs of the more stormy vehemence of his character.

During the same year the hall of the canons was made the scene of another disputation extremely honourable to Zwingli. Francis Lambert of Avignon, who has been already mentioned as a man of learning and dis-

tion, had adopted the new opinions, and abandoned his Franciscan monastery in consequence; and after preaching the gospel with good effect in various parts of Germany and Switzerland, he had fixed his temporary residence at Zurich. Convinced by the arguments of Luther, and properly his convert, he had still some doubts respecting the invocation of the saints, and he solicited a conference with Zwingli on that question. It was granted; and it took place with a result so different from that commonly attending such disputations, that it becomes memorable through that very singularity. Lambert was convinced; he confessed his conversion; he publicly adopted the opinion of his antagonist; and with his hands clasped towards heaven returned thanks to God for the light which was vouchsafed to him.*

The divisions and confusion that had disturbed the city during several months, the uncertainty that prevailed on every side, the animosities that were growing up amongst individuals and families and amongst members of the same family, the insufficiency of the authority of the bishop, or even of the senate, had it been so disposed, to repress these increasing dissensions, rendered it now essential to adopt some general measure for the settlement of the matters in controversy. Accordingly, recourse was had to the expedient commonly adopted on such occasions, especially in free countries,—a conference. In fact the monks were so loud and persevering in their clamours, big with the accustomed charges of heresy, sedition, infidelity, that it became necessary to give the one party an opportunity to substantiate, and the other to confute, such grave accusa-

* Gerdesius, *Hist. Evangel. Renov.*, tom. i. § 115. It was a matter of much surprise to Zwingli that so much liberality should be found in a Franciscan and a Frenchman.—Ep. 207. ~

tions. For these reasons the senate and people of Zurich proclaimed a synod for the discussion of the religious differences, to be held on January 29, 1523 ; and while they invited all their countrymen and all their neighbours to attend it, they especially entreated the Bishop of Constance to appear there in person, or, if that were impossible, at least to send an efficient representative.

That all parties might be well informed as to the subjects proposed for debate, Zwingli published some time before, in sixty-seven propositions, the doctrines which he had preached, and which he was prepared to maintain. Great multitudes thronged to Zurich on the appointed day. They assembled in the Hall of Conference, and the Consul of the Republic opened the deliberations. He referred to the Theses of Zwingli, and called upon any who might dissent from them to proclaim their objections. Faber was present ; and, when all supposed that he would have attempted a confutation of the creed of the Reformers and defended the established system, he pleaded : That this was not the place for so great an argument ; that it was more decorous to await the decision of a general council, which was the only legitimate tribunal in doctrinal matters and which would shortly be convoked ; meanwhile, that he was commanded to offer his mediation for the removal of the differences which distracted the city. Zwingli pressed him to the disputation. He complained of the calumnious charges with which his doctrines were continually assailed ; he challenged his slanderers to come forward on that public occasion, appointed for that express purpose, and contend with him ; he conjured them to acquaint him with his errors ; and as to the council, which he treated as a mere delusion, he professed to desire no other tribunal than the judges assembled before him, and to admit no other

test of the truth of his opinions, than the books of Holy Scripture. Still Faber was contented to reply that he should abstain from any dispute, but should presently publish a written refutation of the errors. But he was betrayed, notwithstanding, into a short skirmish respecting the invocation of the saints, just sufficient to prove the superiority of his antagonist.

No other opponent appearing, the evangelical propositions obtained an undisputed triumph, and the Senate immediately published an edict to this effect: "That, since Ulric Zwingle had publicly and repeatedly challenged the adversaries of his doctrine to confute it by scriptural arguments, and since, notwithstanding, no one had undertaken to do so, he should continue to announce and preach the word of God, just as heretofore. Likewise that all other ministers of religion, whether resident in the city or country, should abstain from teaching any tenet which they could not prove from Scripture; that they should refrain too from making charges of heresy and other scandalous allegations, on pain of severe punishment."

Zwingle soon afterwards, at the desire of Faber, published an "Elucidation of the Sixty-seven Articles;" and it was about this time that the latter, addressing a friend at Mayence, expressed in the following terms his apprehensions of Zwingle: "I have no news for you, except that a second Luther has arisen at Zurich, who is the more dangerous, as he has an austerer people to deal with. Contend with him, whether I will or not, I must; I do it with the greatest reluctance, but I am compelled. You will presently learn this, when I publish my book, to prove the mass to be a sacrifice." We know not whether he ever published this book. But the opposite doctrine was asserted by Zwingle in his eighteenth proposition; who produced, in the same year, a work "On

the Canon of the Mass," arguing with force against that corner-stone of the whole papacy. At the same time he assailed a second and scarcely less essential branch of the Roman system—the use of images; and this with so much effect, that the indignation of the people rose even beyond its just limits, proceeding to acts of violence and open resistance to the authorities. This outbreak of insubordination made it necessary to open a fresh controversy, and a second synod was accordingly summoned for the 26th of the September following.

This assembly was much more numerous than the preceding; above nine hundred persons are said to have been present, from every part of Switzerland. The Bishops of Coire and Basle were invited, as well as the Ordinary of Constance, and the Reformers meditated no less, than to make this an occasion for establishing their doctrines not at Zurich only, but in every province of the whole country. They sought publicity, and feared not controversy; and, seeing how able a polemic they possessed in Zwingli, they were desirous that the papists should appear in force and defend their positions, rather than leave the field, as on the last occasion, undisputed.

The papists were of the same opinion. The bishops neither appeared in person, nor on this occasion sent any to represent them. Nevertheless, the assembly proceeded to deliberation. The edict of convocation had declared: That, as a strict adhesion to Scripture had been enjoined to all ecclesiastics, after the late disputation, and the truth had thus been proclaimed with perfect freedom, the Senate had discovered that there were still two abuses prevailing in the church—the worship of images, and the sacrifice of the mass; that they had not chosen, notwithstanding, to abolish them until they had heard all

that could be advanced in their defence; and that the present synod was called together for that purpose; that a perfect freedom of debate would be allowed, so long as the arguments were derived from Scripture. Having read this decree, the Consul commanded Zwingle to address the meeting.

He began by expounding, according to his view, the scriptural usage of the word Church, as designating—first, the universal body of the faithful—secondly, any portion of that body meeting in the same province or city. His object was to overthrow the objections urged by the Roman Catholics against the authority of such assemblies as the present; and to show that every assembly, united together by common faith in Christ and by the Gospel as a common and only rule of faith and practice, possessed the perfect right to decide its own controversies. In the course of this address he failed not to throw out some severe taunts against the flagitious usurpations of the Pope and his cardinals.

Of the two subjects proposed for discussion the former was undertaken by Leo Judæ; that of the mass by Zwingle. Two very feeble attempts were made, by adversaries without name or credit, to sustain the established practice and doctrine, but they were immediately confuted by the two champions of the Reformation, to the entire satisfaction of the Senate. Yet, when the Consul would have proceeded still farther in his zeal, and recommended an inquiry into various abuses connected with the administration of the Eucharist, Zwingle prudently repressed his ardour and observed, that the people were not yet sufficiently enlightened to receive with unanimity such extensive alterations. On which, that magistrate yielded; and after a pathetic exhortation from Zwingle and some useful admonitions to the

ministers from his learned colleague, the synod was dissolved.*

The authorities did not think it expedient to enforce either of the conclusions to which the Conference had arrived, but were contented to remove those abuses which were in most open contradiction to the word of God. They commanded the priests and monks not thenceforward to institute any public processions; and above all, not to carry about the consecrated bread, or to expose it for adoration in the churches; since those practices were in manifest opposition to the institution of the Supper. Moreover, certain chosen from among the senators, together with the ministers, removed from the principal churches the tombs, which were said to contain the bodies or ashes of the martyrs, and examined them. Many were found empty; those, wherein any fragments of mortality still remained were again committed to consecrated earth. Orders were likewise issued to the ministers against the further use of organs in churches, and the tolling of bells at funerals; against ceremonies for the averting of tempests; against the consecration of palm-branches, of salt, water, tapers, and such like matters; against supreme unction on the point of death, usually denominated the last baptism—all these things were denounced as manifest superstitions and at open variance with the express word of God.

At the same time the Senate caused communications to be addressed to the three prelates above mentioned, to the University of Basle, and the provinces of Switzerland, to explain the precise scheme of reformation which had been adopted at Zurich—earnestly entreating them,

* Two of the cantons, Schaffhausen and St. Gall, were represented at this assembly; and their deputies returned with convictions favourable to the Reformation.

should they discover anything in those changes inconsistent with Holy Writ, to give them friendly admonition thereon, and to count upon their respectful attention to it. Together with these, they sent a little work of edification,* just published by Zwingli, for the establishment of a reformed church; and they promised to wait for a reply till the following Whitsunday, and then, and not till then, to proceed to the completion of their work.

* “Kurtze und Christliche Einleitung des Rathe zu Zurich an alle Prädicanten.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND—ZURICH.

The conduct of Zwingli—question of priority between him and Luther—his earliest preaching—his beginnings independent of Luther—the extent of his influence—his exertions to prevent the Swiss from being the mercenary soldiers of foreign powers—and the personal dangers incurred through them—his books of religious edification—influence on the morals of the citizens—a new conference in January, 1524—decree for the abolition of images—meeting of the Catholic Cantons at Lucerne in the same month—their decree for the conservation of the established system—their embassy to Zurich, and remonstrances—the reply of the Zurichers, and execution of the edict against images—cautious proceedings of the Senate in this affair—Zwingli's account of it—conversion of the Abbesses' College, and of the canons and monks of the three orders—marriage of Zwingli—imputations of the Papists repelled by him—Adrian's attempt to seduce him from his principles—the address of the same and of his successor to the Helvetic body—politic conduct of Rome—the Bishop of Constance wrote in defence of images and the mass—at length, after another mock disputation, in April, 1525, the mass is abolished in Zurich—the form of communion established in its place—Zwingli's dream, and the calumnies derived from it—publication of the historical books of the Old Testament in the Swiss language.

HAVING thus rapidly traced the Reformation at Zurich through all the dangers of its infancy to a position of security, we must look back for a few moments on the conduct and character of that very eminent person, by whom the work, under Divine Providence, was principally performed. We have seen it not uncommonly contended, first, that Zwingli preceded his Saxon ally in the aggression upon the church; next, that, though circumstances gave the larger field and the greater glory to Luther, the same results would still have been effected by

the other, even had Luther never been born. It appears to me that neither of these opinions is strictly true. There is no question that Zwingle, in his earliest preaching, at the Hermitage, and even at Glarus, propounded principles far more evangelical, far more conducive to spiritual edification, than any that proceeded from the ordinary organs of the church. Even then he may have occasionally lashed the ecclesiastical abuses, following the feelings which appeared in his respectful remonstrance to the Bishop of Constance. These are facts which prove the original spirit and independent boldness with which he thought and acted. His talents, too, were sufficient, his learning sufficient, to qualify him for the head of a religious party; and he was early imbued with that essentially Christian doctrine,* which inspired Luther with more than half his energy. Yet it does not appear that he committed any act of insubordination, that he publicly denounced any one of the dogmas or practices of the church, that he sounded any audible note of the trumpet of insurrection, until after his establishment at Zurich. The first contest, in which he engaged even then, he waged under the banners of his bishop; and this took place about sixteen months

* "To trust in the merit of our own works," says Zwingle, "is no better than vanity and folly, not to call it impiety and ignorant impudence." Yet these convictions, strong as they doubtless were, were attained through fewer struggles and burnt with less violence, than the faith of Luther. Zwingle was less vehement, less overbearing, but not less sincere. A similar distinction marks most of the acts and writings of those two champions. His great work, "*De Vera et Falsa Religione*," concludes with a sort of creed: "He therefore is a Christian man who trusts in the only and true God; who relies on His mercy through Christ His Son, God begotten by God (*Deum de Deo*); who forms himself after His example; who dies daily; who daily denies himself; who is only intent on this, that he commit nothing which can possibly offend his God. . . ." This is rather in the tone of Erasmus than of Luther.

after the publication of the theses of Luther. From these considerations it is quite clear, that however early the principles may have been impressed on his mind, however strongly they may have been working there, whatever preparations he may have made for the coming conflict, whatever seed he may have sown by the eloquence of his evangelical teaching, it was Luther who first proclaimed the war and took up arms against the foe.

As to the other question, it is likewise true, that his first movement was perfectly independent of the proceedings of Luther, and was not perhaps occasioned by them. The abuse of indulgences was an evil so monstrous, that Zwingli might probably have resisted it, had Luther been silent. He might even have proceeded farther, and emancipated Zurich from the papal yoke. Politically free, it might have shaken off its religious servitude; and some other canton might have followed, as others did actually follow, its example. Still it is very questionable, whether a revolution, originating in Switzerland, would have spread very widely among the states of Germany. It might have gained some proselytes among the lower classes, or in the imperial cities. But the princes and nobles would assuredly have suspected its republican origin and conspired almost unanimously to repress it. If the central position of Wittenberg, flourishing in the very heart of Germany, was one circumstance propitious to the spread of the principles proceeding from it, it was another that they were engendered under a monarchical government, and that they were not discouraged by a prince, renowned above all others for his virtue, his foresight, and his piety.

Some of the earliest and most strenuous of the professional exertions of Zwingli were directed to the removal

of a great national evil. The courage and poverty of his countrymen had long placed their military services at the disposal of wealthier foreigners and made them a people, not only of soldiers, but of mercenaries. Great mischief flowed from this—much individual misery, destitution of families, neglect of husbandry, rudeness and degradation of character. While he was still at Glarus, this Christian patriot turned his eloquence and spiritual influence to that subject, and endeavoured to make it manifest to the misguided peasantry, how little profitable were those warlike habits, either to their country or to themselves—how little consistent with the profession of the Gospel of peace. The princes, who profited by the venality of the Swiss, stationed powerful agents in various parts of the country to forward their respective interests; and among them there was not one who pressed those interests so diligently as the Pope. To him the Apostolical treasury supplied, by the purchase of foreign defenders, what his own subjects wanted in bravery or fidelity; and as it was essential to the prosperity of the church that such defenders should be provided, so its very ministers were instructed to prepare the people for that form of obedience. The ignorant Highlanders of the Alps were taught, that it was a holy thing to gird their loins for battle, and a glorious martyrdom to fall in the service of the See of Rome.

When Zwingli raised his voice against this practice, not only long established, but maintained by so strong a combination of interests and power, he roused at once a host of enemies, entirely independent of those created by his general struggles for reformation; and so fierce and so unscrupulous, as not to shrink from any measures for his destruction. At Zurich he persisted in his generous exertions, and incurred through them great personal *danger*. More than once attempts were made upon his

life;* and at one period it was necessary to station guards before his house during the night, in order to preserve him from the daggers of his foes.

Yet at this very time he was devoting all his energies to the improvement of the people. Besides his Sunday sermons, he delivered daily lectures in theology, and discharged with diligence his pastoral duties. He established and directed various schools; maintained an important and very extensive correspondence on private no less than public matters; and composed several elaborate and valuable works on subjects of religious edification. Besides, he was engaged in a succession of serious controversies—first, with the Roman Catholics alone, then with the Anabaptists also, and lastly, as the sad consummation of his theological feuds, with Luther and his clamorous disciples. Meanwhile he had his recompence in observing the immediate effect of his domestic triumphs upon the morals of the citizens. At least it was made matter of boast by his followers, that the manners of the Zurichers were softened and their habits improved by the knowledge and influence of the Gospel; and that the acts of violence, wantonness and intemperance, which had hitherto disgraced them, became less and less frequent, according to the progress of the principles of the Reformation.

Certain canons and priests of Zurich, dissatisfied with the termination of the last conference, urged the government to afford them another opportunity of defending the ancient practices. Their request was granted, and the time appointed was the 13th and 14th of the following January, 1524. This disputation appears to have

* Hottinger (lib. xvi. p. 236) publishes an anonymous letter, addressed to Zwingle, in May, 1519, informing him of an intended attempt to poison him. It was written in Greek, and was the composition of a priest, communicating what he had received in confession.

been private, and was conducted before certain delegates of the senate. The subjects of discussion were images, the mass and the invocation of the saints. Zwingle and Leo Judæ advocated their principles, as before, and with the same success. And so far were the papists from gaining any advantage from this faint and tardy effort, that the senate, on the conclusion of the debate, advanced one step beyond its former conclusion, and decreed the immediate abolition of the images. The mass was still left for the moment untouched; but it was rapidly sinking into disuse, and merely lingering on towards self-dissolution.

Meanwhile, the other cantons of Switzerland, which still continued, without exception, in real or nominal obedience to the church, considered that some demonstration was at length become necessary on their part. Accordingly they assembled in large numbers at Lucerne, on the 26th of January, 1524, and issued their unanimous decree: "That no one should deride or condemn the word of God, as it had been announced for more than 1400 years, nor the mass, in which the body of the Lord was consecrated, to His honour and to the solace of the living and the dead; that those who received the Lord's Supper should confess during Lent their sins to the priests, and observe in all respects the established customs; that all the rights and usages of the church should be observed; that every one should obey his pastor, and receive as usual the sacraments at his hands, and pay him the annual dues; that honour should be shown to the priesthood; that abstinence from meats should be observed on the prescribed days, and from eggs and cheese during Lent; that no opinion of Luther, adverse to the received custom of the church, should be taught either in public or private; that no mention should be made of Luther, or of any new doc-

trine, in taverns or at festivals; that the images of the saints should remain everywhere inviolate; that the ministers of the churches should be held responsible for their teaching to none except the civil government, and that protection should be afforded them in case of popular commotion; that those who carried about the relics of the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary, and St. Anthony, should be subject to no derision;* that the religious edicts of the bishop of Constance should be observed; that all violations of the present decree should be denounced to the magistrate; and that persons should be established everywhere as inspectors of religious affairs.”†

To give effect to this decree an embassy was sent, on the 21st of the following March, to Zurich, in which all the cantons represented at Lucerne united, with the single exception of Schaffhausen. The delegates expressed the sorrow universally occasioned by the changes which had been introduced. They lamented that the delightful repose of church and state, transmitted from all antiquity, had been thus violently interrupted. The time was arrived for interference, to prevent the further diffusion of the evil. The fruits of the doctrine of Luther were now sufficiently apparent—the people were everywhere insubordinate, and not indistinctly menacing rebellion. Zwingle and Leo Judæ were the instruments of communicating this contagion among the Swiss, and they put such arbitrary interpretations on what was in truth the Gospel of peace, as to open the gates to disorder and dissension. The nature of their doctrine was not quite clear, but its effects were sufficiently obvious—

* “Qui S. Spiritus, Mariæ Virginis, Divi Antonii circumferant Reliquias a nemine rideantur.”

† “Sint ubique tanquam Inspectores eorum quæ fiunt.” Gerdes. tom. i. p. 295.

the neglect of the distinction of meats, the marriage of priests, monks and nuns, the suspension of the services of religion, of the music and prayers in churches, neglect of confession and penitence, destruction of images, &c. &c. The states in assembly could no longer endure those innovations; they therefore entreated the men of Zurich to desist from their enterprise, and to return to the religion of their ancestors. Unquestionably there were abuses in the ecclesiastical system. They were all oppressed by the Pope, and his train of cardinals, bishops, and such like (*id genus aliis*),* who, by their usurpations, simony and indulgences, exhausted the wealth of the country—and at the same time acquired a jurisdiction, which had properly no reference to civil matters, but which they extended to everything. They were willing to co-operate in any scheme for the correction of these evils and such as these.

To this specious remonstrance, proceeding from so very large a portion of the Helvetic body, the Senate of Zurich returned an immediate and manly reply: “It is now almost five years since we began to listen to the sacred instructions of the ministers of our Church; and at first this kind of doctrine did indeed seem new to us, as we had heard nothing of the like before. But when we understood and clearly perceived that this was its end and scope: to make manifest Jesus Christ, the altar and safeguard of our salvation, who poured out his life and blood for the sins of the world, and alone redeemed miserable men from eternal death, the only advocate and mediator between God and man: we could not refrain from embracing with ardent eagerness so salutary a message.” They then argued, in reply to the representations of the Assembly, that great har-

* Sleidan, lib. iv. ann. 1524.

mony prevailed in the apostolic ages of the Church, which might now again be realised, if men would only reject human traditions and adhere to the Gospel; that Luther, or any other who taught that doctrine, taught the truth, but that the introduction of his name was invidious, as if they believed it on his persuasion; that it was no disparagement to the Virgin and the saints that they placed their faith in Christ; that the Scriptures were now in the hands of every one, so that the preachers could not pervert the truth if they would; that the errors ascribed to them had not been proved; and, though they had held a council for that purpose, and summoned the bishops and all others to attend it, yet that those prelates did not attend either in person or by deputy, nor were any of the cantons represented there, except Schaffhausen and St. Gall; that their teachers and ministers gave no ground for dissension, but rather those whose emoluments led them to oppose the word of God; that they denounced various vices prevailing among the people, and exhorted them to the fear of God; and, if all were not amended, yet certainly that there existed not within their territories that degree of debauchery and intemperance which was commonly found elsewhere; and this especially, since the practice of foreign and mercenary service had been disused among them. Concerning the eating of meat and eggs, that they had published a law to prevent any great scandals; that marriage was by God's word permitted to all men; while Paul expressly commanded that the minister of a church should be the husband of one wife; not so fornication, for which licences were confessedly sold by bishops to their clergy; that convents of nuns were not free from the same reproach; that colleges of canons and such-like establishments were founded for the support of the poor; it was therefore just that they should return to those purposes;

that pious and faithful ministers were nowhere more in honour than with them ; that the orders of monks were a human invention, not an institution of God.

They continued : “ If that body of clergy, who have lately sent us an embassy and a remonstrance, will instruct us as to any one of our errors, we will give them every satisfaction. If not, then let them perform their duty—let them teach the truth themselves, and abstain from calumniating others. That they are so averse from the rapacity and immoderate usurpations of the Papists, and wish the removal of those scandals is delightful information to us ; but we must tell them, that there is no better method of effecting this, than by the entire acceptance of the word of God. For so long as their laws and decrees shall be in force, there can be no hope of emancipation—the single weapon for overthrowing all their dignity and power is the preaching of the word of God. They perceive clearly enough how great is the force of the Gospel and of truth ; and it is because they can put no trust in their own strength that they are imploring the aid of kings. . . . There is nothing that we desire more ardently, than the universal prevalence of peace, nor will we in any respect violate our laws and treaties of alliance. But in this affair, which involves our eternal safety, we cannot act otherwise than we do, unless we should be first convicted of error. We therefore again exhort you, as we have already done, if you think our doctrine opposed to Scripture, to prove this within a fixed period, before the end of May for instance ; for till that time we shall expect an answer from you and from the bishops, and from the University of Basle.”

After the appointed interval had elapsed, as no reply was received from the Roman Catholic cantons, the senate of Zurich proceeded to the execution of its late decree respecting images. We should observe the de-

liberate caution of its progress in this delicate transaction. In September, 1523, the images, as well as the mass, were arraigned in a public disputation, and the evangelical ministers encouraged to continue their attacks upon both ; but neither the one nor the other was officially condemned in the edict which followed. After a second discussion on the same subjects in the January following, with the same result, the abolition of the images was indeed decreed ; but the authorities for the moment advanced no farther—they wished the work to be accomplished by the general consent, but not by the open violence, of the people, and some time was yet necessary to secure that consent. Meanwhile they challenged the whole of Catholic Switzerland to defend the idols, and the challenge was not accepted. Thus fortified, when at length they did interpose to remove the condemned abuse, they still conducted their measures with so much moderation, as to make it appear that they were rather obeying and regulating the popular will than leading it, so that every shadow of civil dissension was avoided, and the work seemed to spring from the unanimous determination of the canton.

There exists a long account of this transaction from the pen of Zwingle* himself, who was a principal actor in it. From this it appears that the power of the senate was first exerted to restrain individuals from destroying any images, except such as were their own property. It was next decreed, that every separate church might destroy its images after a certain prescribed method : the members of each church were to be in the first instance assembled, with their pastors at their head, to be consulted on the subject, and guided by the opinion of the majority ; those churches which would still retain their

* In Responsione ad Valentinum Comparum.

idols being left to the further instruction of their ministers. Before the work of demolition commenced, all the proprietors of private idols were directed to remove them from the churches within a prescribed time; and when these various precautions had been duly observed, the appointed officers proceeded (about the middle of June) to their duty. They consisted of three ministers, Zwingle, Leo Judæ and Engelhard, and twelve senators, with some necessary assistants; and they accomplished their labours without any opposition from the citizens, while the rural population displayed even greater zeal in destroying the objects of their recent adoration.

“What surprised me,” continues Zwingle, “was this; that among all those wooden gods, which had been held in such high honour, not one had virtue enough to resist the flames, but all, without a word in reply, submitted to the fiery punishment. Still there was one prodigy, and I must relate it. There was a famous stone statue of the Virgin among the nuns in Altenbach, held in great reverence, and of much miraculous celebrity. There was a constant belief respecting it, that nothing could remove it from its place, and that, so often as it had been transferred elsewhere, however firmly it might have been fixed and fastened, so often it had reappeared on the following morning on its former basis, as steady and stable as before. We too removed this statue, and in good earnest; but from that time it has never returned to its position—here is indeed the miracle! Forgive me, my Christian brethren, if I speak with some ridicule on this subject; but ridicule is not unsuitable to those lying and most absurd inventions and fables, which have been related in utter shamelessness respecting these idols. I rejoice, then, and bid all others rejoice, that this most iniquitous imposture was at length removed from the eyes of men; for when this was once

accomplished, all the other figments of the pontifical religion were overthrown still more successfully, and with a more complete consent of all the citizens.* To God, through whose power and grace all this has been accomplished, be praise and glory for ever, amen."

The demolition of the images was presently followed by the conversion of the two most important religious institutions in Zurich. The first which offered its voluntary adhesion was the Abbesses' College, called the Frauen-Münster. It was distinguished, not only by very high antiquity, but also by various immunities and privileges and the possession of splendid revenues. These it surrendered into the hands of the government, on the understanding that the funds should be applied to pious and charitable purposes, with a due respect to vested interests, and the privileges, which were those of coining and a peculiar jurisdiction, were thenceforward exercised by the senate. The abbess, named Catharine Cimmern, retired on an honourable pension and presently married. Towards the end of the same year, 1524, the canons, after some negotiation with the government respecting the disposal of their revenues, followed this example. The few remaining monks of the three orders were united in one monastery, where the young were taught to apply their industry to some useful trade, and the old were permitted to end their days in peace. The monastery of the Dominicans was converted into a house of public reception, and their chapel into the fourth parish church.

In the April of the same year, Zwingli made public† his nuptials with Ann Reinhart, the widow of John

* "His enim sublati, reliqua quoque omnia pontificiæ religionis figmenta felicius et majori cum consensu omnium nostrorum expugnata sunt."

† D'Aubigné (vol. ii. p. 527, note) gives proofs from Zwingli's cor-

Meyer, a gentleman of the county of Baden. This event took place about fourteen months before the marriage of Luther, and, like the other, it gave occasion to some calumnies. That it was an earlier declaration of ecclesiastical independence, of course aggravated the offence. Yet, as Zwingli had not been a monk, nor his bride a nun, the scandal was not in his case so enormous, nor was there so wide a field for slander. One imputation alone seems to have given him much mortification—that of interestedness, arising from the supposed wealth of the lady : and he thought it not beneath him to publish a short “Apology,” now extant, in refutation of the charge. His character needed no such justification : he was as free throughout his whole life from the influence of pecuniary motives as Luther, or Melancthon, or Calvin ; nor has any act, betraying a mean or sordid spirit, ever been alleged against him with any show of truth, either by his Catholic or Lutheran opponents.

Meanwhile the pontiffs were not indifferent spectators. Adrian’s first attempt to undermine the Swiss Reformation was an insidious address to the vanity and ambition of its chief. On the 23rd of January, 1523, he wrote to Zwingli in terms of the utmost condescension and flattery. “Although we have commanded the bishop to treat of these matters in common with you all and in public, yet, since we have especial knowledge of your distinguished merits, since we have a very close regard and respect for your devotion and a peculiar confidence in you, we have directed the same bishop, our nuncio, to deliver to you our letters separately, and

respondence that the ceremony had been performed before this date, probably two years before. It may have been prudent to conceal an act, so sure to be misrepresented, till the Reformation was placed beyond danger.

to declare our great good will towards you. We do therefore encourage your devotion in the name of the Lord, and exhort you to place your whole trust in him; and as our designs are tending to your honour and advantage, so do you on your behalf prosper our affairs and those of the apostolical see; you will thus secure from us no moderate recompence.”* The subsequent conduct of Zwingle supplies his answer to this insulting overture.

On the 15th of the following August the same Pope addressed a very warm exhortation to the Helvetic body; and in like manner his successor Clement, in the ensuing April, saluted it with the most profuse expressions of respect and benevolence. And not only to the governing body were his briefs directed, but to all the individuals, whether lay or clerical, who were distinguished by any recent exertions in support of the established faith. These timely efforts were not without effect in cementing a closer union among the Roman Catholic cantons, and rousing them to officious intervention in the religious concerns of those which wavered. Whatever errors the see may have committed in its dealings with the German Reformers, in Switzerland it can be charged with no defect in policy. No art was left untried to recover the apostates, or to fix the undecided, or to confirm and band together the spirits of the faithful.

The Bishop of Constance did not himself disdain to enter into polemical controversy with the government of Zurich. He composed a long treatise in defence of images and the mass, in which he collected the arguments usually employed by the church, and sent it to the senate on the 1st of June, 1524. He professed to have

* Apud Melchior Adam. Vitæ Germ. Theologorum. Vit. Zwinglii.

written it in compliance with the request of that body for scriptural instruction on those points, and he exhorted them to be guided by that which he thus offered them. The senate replied on the 18th of the following August, and confuted his reasonings, having previously returned the most convincing and effectual answer by the abolition of one of the contested practices.

But the mass continued still untouched. So deeply was the opinion, on which it rested, impressed upon the feelings and credulity of the vulgar, that some time was required to efface it. It now disappeared, however, with greater rapidity. The constant exhortations and arguments of the preachers, all directed against it, the example of the great, the expressed decision of two conferences, the perpetual appeal to the simple scriptural account of the institution of the Sacrament, and the steady progress of the evangelical doctrine on many other points—all combined to remove it even from the least enlightened mind; and it fell day by day into less and less repute, till at length, on the 11th of April, 1525, Zwingli, and the other principal ministers of the church of Zurich, thought the moment arrived to recommend to the senate the immediate abolition of the sacrifice of the altar. One advocate only, whom Zwingli designates as a certain scribe,* presented himself to defend the esta-

* "Scriba quidam, qui albus an ater sit non est hujus instituti dicere." This dispute gave occasion to a foolish story, on which Zwingli's enemies founded some memorable calumnies. The scribe produced some argument, to which Zwingli, though he perceived its fallacy, was not prepared with a satisfactory scriptural answer. After deeply reflecting on the subject he fell asleep, and as the following morning was at hand—"Visus sum mihi in somno multo cum tædio demum contendere cum scriba, sicque obmutuisse, ut quod verum scirem, negante lingua beneficium suum, proloqui non possem. . . . Ibi ἀπὸ μηχανῆς visus est monitor adesse (*ater an albus* nihil memini, somnium enim narro) qui diceret: 'Quin ignave respondes ei, quod Exodi xii.

blished opinion. The senate adjourned the debate till the following day, and then, after a conference between the divines and four of their own deputies, published their decree: "Henceforward, by God's will, celebrate the Eucharist according to the institution of Christ and the apostolical rite. Be it permitted to those infirm and yet rude in faith to continue the ancient practice for this once only. Let the mass be universally abolished, laid aside, and antiquated, so as not to be repeated even to-morrow." The great body of the people immediately communicated according to the new form: those who still clung to the hereditary observance were even less numerous than the Reformers expected.

Zwingle had previously prepared a form of communion, which was delivered in writing, and was as follows:—After the conclusion of the sermon, a table was brought

scribitur. Est enim Phase, hoc est, transitus Dei.' Protinus ut hoc phasma visum est expergefio et e lecto exilio. Locum apud Septuaginta primum undique circumspectio, ac de eo coram tota concione pro virili dissero—qui sermo ubi acceptus est, &c." Zwingle considering this vision as a divine interposition in his favour, published the account of it, not blind to the ridicule which it would occasion, in *Dei solius gratiam*. It did of course give rise to much ridicule; but the severest slander was precisely of a nature which Zwingle could not foresee. Of his monitor he says—by a Latinism somewhat too refined for his adversaries, and which he had also employed when speaking of "the scribe"—"I know not whether he was white or black;"—meaning merely, I know not, I observed not, his shape or colour; I paid no attention to him. Yet they immediately circulated, with great triumph, "that Zwingle, by his own confession, had learnt his doctrine of the Sacrament from a black monitor, *i. e.*, the devil." This taunt was not very creditable in a Roman Catholic foe; but, after the confessions of Wartburg, the disciples of Luther should have been still more cautious in objecting it. Luther and Zwingle had each his own superstition. It was not to be expected that the common enemy should spare either; but they should have shown mercy on each other. Zwingle relates this dream in a grave work: "*Subsidium de Eucharistia. Gerdes. Histor. Evangel. Renov.*," tom. i., § 127, et seq.

into the church and covered with a clean cloth, and the bread and wine were placed upon it. The minister, with the deacons, approached the table, and called the people to attention; then, after a short prayer, one of the deacons read the institution of the Lord's Supper from the epistle to the Corinthians, and another recited a part of the sixth of St. John, to show in what sense the communicants do truly eat the body and blood of Christ. Next, after reciting the Creed, the minister exhorted the people to self-examination. Then all knelt down, and repeated the Lord's Prayer, on which the minister took in his hands unleavened bread, and in the sight of all the faithful recited, with a loud voice, the institution of the Lord's Supper. He then delivered the bread and cup to the deacon, to present them to the people, for the people to distribute them to each other. During this process, one of the ministers read from the Gospel of St. John those edifying discourses held by Jesus with his disciples after the ablution of their feet.* The congregation then again fell down on their knees, and returned thanks for the benefit of their redemption by Christ Jesus.

For the everlasting establishment of their work, Zwingli, with Leo Judæ and other learned coadjutors, published in the same year the Pentateuch, and other historical books of the Old Testament, after the version of Luther, correcting such errors as they discovered in it, and accommodating the language to the dialect of Switzerland.

* Gerdesius, lib. c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND.—BASLE.


Œcolampadius—his origin, and early life and proficiency—connexion with Erasmus—residence at Augsburg—retires to a neighbouring monastery—whence his liberal opinions occasion his removal—his return to Basle—origin of the Reformation there—Erasmus—parties long balanced—influence of the university and bishop—hostile to reform—disputation and expulsion of Farel—great Catholic gathering at Baden—the disputation—Faber, Eck, and Œcolampadius present—Zwingle not permitted to leave Zurich—Erasmus makes a declaration of adherence to the church—matters controverted—substance of the decree for the support of the papal church—the result generally advantageous to the Catholics—attempt to excite the Emperor against the Swiss Reformers—boldly resisted by Zwingle—official order for the abolition of idols in some of the churches at Basle—the conduct of the senate during these transactions—the popular commotion, and circumstances attending the final demolition of the images—concomitant popular change in the political constitution of Basle—departure of Erasmus—marriage of Œcolampadius, and sarcasms of Erasmus.

JOHN HAUSSCHEIN, which in Greek is Œcolampadius, was born at Winsperg in 1482, the same year with Spalatin. He was descended from an honourable family of Basle, and received his early education at Heilbrun and Heidelberg, where he was presently distinguished above his contemporaries by the precocity of his talents. He was intended for the profession of the law, and proceeded to learn the principles of the science at Bologna; but there, partly through the unwholesomeness of an Italian climate, partly through a domestic misfortune which diminished his pecuniary means, he resided for a few months only, and presently returned to Heidel-

berg. He then abandoned the studies, which had been imposed on him by his father's inclination rather than his own, and devoted himself to theology. He began his ministry in his native place; but he was called from this obscurity in 1514, and appointed to the principal church at Basle; and two years afterwards he was promoted by the university to the dignity of doctor in theology.

Meanwhile he had made such unusual proficiency in "the three languages," as to attract the attention of Erasmus, who was at that time at Basle, engaged in preparing his first edition of the New Testament. He obtained the assistance of Œcolampadius in comparing the quotations from the Old Testament, which are found in the New, with the Hebrew original, and he acknowledged it in his preface:—"In this part I have received no little aid from the subsidiary labour of a man eminent not for his piety only, but for his knowledge of the three languages, which constitutes a true theologian. I mean John Œcolampadius; for I had not myself made sufficient progress in Hebrew to authorise me to pronounce on those passages."

In 1518 Œcolampadius, on the invitation of the canons of the principal church at Augsburg, removed to that city, and preached to large numbers of the people; but it appears that in this department of his profession he was not successful. His manner was too chastised for ears accustomed to the noisy gesticulations of the mendicants; his style and expressions were subdued and nerveless, and argued a moral timidity, fatal to the acquisition and exercise of that authority which is essential to the effective performance of the duty of the pulpit. And thus, whether disheartened by the consciousness of this incapacity, or desirous of more exclusive devotion to his literary pursuits, he retired in the following year, in



spite of the urgent remonstrances of his best friends, to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Augsburg. In that seclusion he probably purposed to pass the remainder of his days, and had he lived in peaceful days it might have ended even so; but in those times of religious agitation, while such violent exertions were making by both parties, it was not probable that a divine of high celebrity and solid erudition would be allowed to repose in obscure neutrality.

His friends, especially Capito, urged him to declare his opinion on the subjects then in controversy. Some expressions favourable to the new doctrines, which had fallen from him in the confidence of private intercourse, were eagerly divulged and propagated. He then published some sermons of an evangelical tendency, and next a book "Concerning Confession," which betrayed his wide dissent from the pontifical system. His brother monks were immediately in arms; he was denounced by Glapio* at the Diet of Worms; he was threatened with imprisonment by some; with death by others; a conspiracy seems actually to have been formed for his destruction; till at length he found it necessary to take a somewhat hasty departure from his convent (in 1521) after residing there rather less than two years. His immediate refuge was the castle of Francis Sickingen, at Ebernburg, where he remained, with some other learned reformers, till the violent death of their patron. Then he returned to Basle, and engaged in good earnest in the work of the Reformation.

The foundations were already laid and the materials prepared for his hands. The edition of the New Testament published there was the corner-stone; and to Erasmus, however he might afterwards disclaim it,

* Melchior Adam, Vita Æcolampadii.

the honour of originating the changes at Basle in justice belongs. For five years, ending with 1520, Capito had been engaged in expounding the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of Matthew, to large congregations; and he thus announced, in that year, his progressive success: "Here matters are constantly improving. The theologians and monks are with us. A very large audience attends my lectures on Matthew. There are some indeed who threaten dreadful things against Luther; but the doctrine is too deeply rooted to be torn up by any violence. Some accuse me of favouring Lutheranism; but I carefully dissemble my inclination."* Gaspar Hedio,† who was doctor in the university, was engaged, with the same discretion, in the same cause. "There is no good man here (as he wrote to Zwingli in 1519) who does not wish you well—in body I mean; for about the health of your mind we have no apprehension." Likewise one Adolphus, a physician of Schaffhausen, wrote to Vadianus, in 1521: "At Basle and Friburg every man of learning is a Lutheran—i. e., a good Christian."

But notwithstanding these flattering professions, and some effects which were really produced by the working of the evangelical principles, the parties remained for some time nearly balanced, both in the senate and even among the people; and the fury of the conflict was not

* Ap. Scultetum, Ann. 1520, p. 67. In 1518 Capito thus wrote to John Eck:—"Neque enim omnia Lutheri amplector; qui nunc Paulo deditissimus, quotidie comperio ex quibusnam fontibus hauserit novitatem." Capito was a native of Alsace, born in 1578. He died at Strasburg, of a plague which raged there in 1541.

† He was born at Eslingen, was educated and graduated at Basle, and was thence removed to Mayence to preach the Gospel. Expelled from that city he retired to Strasburg, where his labours were more acceptable. There he generally resided, respectable for piety and a mild and moderate temper.

appeased by two edicts, the one prohibiting slanders and personalities, the other enjoining "Union, Peace, and Charity," which were published by the authorities in 1524 and 1525. It appears, however, that the monasteries were thrown open during the latter year, and permission granted to those, who so wished, to quit them and carry their property away with them.* Æcolampadius was at this time the undisputed leader of the evangelical party. Being desirous to resign his cure (of St. Martin's church) and being much solicited to retain it by the congregation and managers (*curatores*) of the church, he agreed to do so on two conditions: That he should be free to teach or repudiate whatever was commanded or condemned by Scripture; and also to reject such papal ceremonies as he might deem useless. The Senate sanctioned this compact; and by virtue of it he performed the services, that of baptism included, in the vulgar

* On July 14, 1522, Erasmus wrote to the President of the Senate of Mechlin: "There are here more than an hundred thousand persons who hate the See of Rome, and are to a great extent adherents of Luther." In 1523 he assured Henry VIII. of England (see ch. xxiii.) that there then was no press at Basle which dared to publish a word against Luther, or refused to promulgate anything against the Pope. In 1525 he thus wrote to John de Hondt: "*Evangelii mirus hic est successus. Missam abominantur plurimi . . . Velum et cuculla deponitur passim. Nubunt et ducunt uxores Monachæ et Monachi—tam mihi tutum non est hic diutius vivere. Mores istorum, qui hic docent, magis mihi displicent quam ipsa Dogmata.*" During the same year he was consulted by the Senate concerning the imposition of restrictions upon the press and other matters. His replies were guarded, but not altogether hostile. Without allowing any general licence to the press, he would not prohibit the works of Pellican and Æcolampadius. He considered images, sacred music, chrism, &c., among things indifferent. He regretted the proceedings of Zwingle, but he would not counsel war against Zurich. Dispensations about morals, vows, &c., ought (he said) to be obtained from the Pope. At any rate these matters should not be pressed until an Imperial Diet, or some general council, had decided regarding them. Gerdes. tom. ii. § 105.

tongue, and administered the sacrament in both kinds. At the same time he assailed with so much advantage other papal ceremonies, such as the use of holy water, the consecration of palms, wax lights, cakes, &c., that they presently lost their reverence among the people, and fell into contempt and disuse.

Yet the influence of the university, with that of the bishop, was continually exerted in opposition to the new opinions.* A strong proof of this appeared in 1524. William Farel, an exile from France, arrived at Basle in the February of that year, and demanded permission to dispute publicly against human traditions. The vicar of the bishop and the rector of the university resisted this intention by their edicts. But the Senate, justly considering that fair discussion offered the best prospect of eliciting truth, insisted that the disputation should be held.

Farel advanced thirteen articles, of which the following is the substance: That a perfect rule of life was prescribed by Christ; that marriage was permitted to the incontinent; that distinctions of food, dress, ceremonies, &c., were judaical; that long prayers were dangerous; that it was the minister's duty to preach the word of God; that he, who does not believe that he is justified by faith, makes himself a god; that fasts were the pretexts of hypocrites; that idols were prohibited by Scripture, &c. These theses were supported with great approbation in the presence of a very numerous assembly. Yet so powerful even then was the influence of the combined academical and ecclesiastical authorities, that means were presently found to expel the dangerous intruder from the city.

Meanwhile the great majority of the cantons continued in their allegiance to the church. In many the evan-

* Basle was not one of the latest universities. It was founded by Pius II. in 1460.

gelical opinions had gained little or no footing ; in others they were embraced by few, and professed perhaps by none—at least the government still protected the ancient religion. Yet had they not remained inactive observers of the changes, which had been introduced into a portion of the league and which were continually progressive. At length they were moved, chiefly by the agency of the indefatigable Eck, to make a great demonstration of their fidelity. Twelve cantons subscribed, after some altercations, to an act convoking a general assembly of the Helvetic body. The place fixed for the meeting was Baden, and the day the 16th of May, 1526. Their object was scarcely veiled by a decent show of impartiality—it was, in fact, what it almost professed to be, to silence the evangelical teachers and to destroy the hopes of the Reformation.

At the time appointed, Faber, Eck and other celebrated papal polemics presented themselves; the bishops of Constance, Basle, Coire and Lausanne, sent their representatives; the whole force and parade of the Roman Catholic party were displayed. Opposed to them were Œcolampadius, Berthold Haller of Bern and a few other teachers of less eminence. Zwingli had been summoned. But the authorities of Zurich positively prohibited his egress from the walls.* It was against him most especially that this storm was directed.

* Zwingli's letter (April 21, 1526) "To the legates of the twelve cantons assembled at Baden," excusing his absence from the conference, may be found in Gerdesius. *Monum. Antiq.* t. ii. no. xvi. He objected to the place chosen for the disputation, and represented the whole matter, not as an inquisition into truth, but merely as a grand effort to put down the Reformation. But his deference to the authorities, under which he lived, furnished of course the grand excuse. Eck had challenged him to a public disputation two years before, but they had been unable to agree about the field of action—each of course desiring a city and an audience

Two or three evangelical teachers much less obnoxious had very lately fallen victims to their zeal. Zwingli would have been a more illustrious martyr. When he was made acquainted with the decision of the Senate, being still desirous that the cause at least should not suffer through his absence, he made to the directors of the conference this proposal: That reports of all that might be advanced by Eck should be carefully taken and transmitted to him on the same day; and he engaged that on the following his confutation of the whole should be presented to the assembly. He received no reply to this offer; for it was not his arguments that the papists wanted, but his presence.

Erasmus, who was still at Basle, was likewise summoned; but he declined, as afterwards when invited to Augsburg, on the plea of health. However he took that occasion to make a solemn declaration of his perfect adherence to the orthodox opinion regarding the Eucharist. "God is my witness, who alone knoweth the hearts of men, and His wrath I call down upon my head, if I have ever given place in my mind to an opinion opposed to that, which the Catholic church has hitherto maintained with such general consent." The best commentary on this declaration was also furnished by himself, in a letter which he wrote very soon afterwards to Pickheimer: "I should not dislike the opinion of Œcolampadius, were it not that the consent of the church is against it. I can neither understand what a body does which is not the object of the senses, nor what advantage it would confer

partial to himself. Among his reasons for objecting to Baden, as the place of conference, one was, that the canton of Fribourg, conjointly with those of Lucerne, Uri, Schweitz, Zug, and Underwalden, had given orders to seize his person and conduct him as a prisoner to Lucerne, in violation of the treaties among the cantons.

if it were, so long as the spiritual grace is present in the symbols. Yet I cannot depart, as I never have departed, from the consent of the church.”*

The disputation was opened on the 17th of May, and Eck proposed the seven following theses:—That the true body and blood of Christ were present in the Lord’s Supper; that these were truly offered in the mass both for the living and the dead; that the Virgin Mary and the other saints were to be invoked as intercessors; that their images were not to be removed; that there was a Purgatory after this life; that infants were born in original sin; that the baptism of Christ, not that of John, washed away original sin. The two last of these, which were probably directed against some opinions ascribed to Zwingle, were not contested; but respecting the others much elaborate argument was maintained on both sides, during a tedious controversy of eighteen days. Œcolampadius contended with learning and earnestness; but the clamour, as at Leipzig, was on the side of Eck; and on this occasion he obtained a more substantial triumph. When the debate at length concluded, and the question was proposed to the assembly: Whether they approved the positions of Eck, or the confutations of Œcolampadius? a large majority decided in favour of the former. A decree was then published, and subscribed by nine of the assembled cantons, in direct condemnation of the evangelical cause. It was to this effect:—

“ Since Zwingle, the principal author of this doctrine which is misleading the confederacy, though frequently summoned, has not appeared to give account of his faith, and since those preachers who think with him, and who have disputed at Baden, have not suffered themselves to be brought to wisdom, be they, without further warning,

* Apud Gerdes., tom. ii. § 109.

proscribed, excluded and separated from our communion, as condemned by the common church of Christ. We, for our parts, will persist in the faith which has been transmitted through so many centuries, and in which our ancestors have been born and died."

It then specified several observances and ceremonies, to which, notwithstanding the objections of the new sectarians, a faithful adherence was enjoined; and lastly, it prohibited the sale of any work either of Luther or Zwingli, and established a rigid censorship on the press.

The immediate effect of this decree was unquestionably that which its framers designed. It strengthened the partisans of the church. Where they were already predominant, it gave them authority to crush the buds of insurrection; where they were weak, it gave them courage to withstand the advances of apostacy—seeing that the large proportion of the confederacy was still with them, that it did not overlook their struggles, and that it might presently exert itself in good earnest to assist them. Such was the effect of the edict; but the disputation had an opposite tendency. Notwithstanding the exultation of the papists, the calm and scriptural reasonings of the Reformers had their influence upon the less prejudiced hearers, the voice of reason was not entirely drowned in the orthodox clamours, and the cause of the Gospel was secretly promoted by the blow, which was intended for its destruction.

But not contented with their theological triumph, Eck and Faber next endeavoured to turn other arms against the rebels. They would have excited, not the Pope only, but the Emperor also, to issue edicts for their chastisement. This last attempt gave an advantage to Zwingli, of which he instantly availed himself. He represented to the Helvetic body that they were exempt from the imperial jurisdiction; that, according to the treaty which

terminated the war of Swabia, the Emperor could not by any statute molest their republic; and that they should beware how they made themselves parties to his usurpation, and, by enforcing his edicts, reimpose upon their own necks the yoke, which it had cost them so much to break. Doubtless this seasonable appeal to the nationality of his fellow-countrymen was useful to his cause; and it was of no trifling service to him, among a free and sensitive people, that he could associate the name of the Reformation with the principles of their independence.

On his return to Basle, Œcolampadius advanced gradually, though every step was disputed, to the conclusion of his work. The evangelical practice of singing hymns in the vulgar tongue was found to be a successful method of exciting the people to piety, and attaching them to the new opinions. It was in the same degree offensive to the papists; but in 1526 it was established, after some struggles, by the authority of the senate.

In 1527 the question of the mass was submitted to open disputation. The Roman system was defended by one Augustinus Marius, and assailed as an abomination by Œcolampadius and others. The authorities were desirous to refer the dispute to the decision of a council, but the citizens demanded an immediate declaration on the subject. Accordingly, on the 7th of October, the senate decreed, that both parties should continue to preach their respective doctrines, provided there were no interruption of civil concord.*

In 1528 that body advanced somewhat farther. In a popular tumult several images were pulled down and demolished. The offenders were imprisoned; but this was followed by so strong a demonstration of the popular

* "Salva concordia animorum civili."—Sculdet. ann. 1527.

will, that the government issued orders, on the 15th of April, for the official abolition of the idols in four of the principal churches and an hospital. In all the others they were still tolerated and protected. The mass was likewise preserved partially—in the same institutions which retained their images. Here, as at Zurich, those two were the principal points on which the conflict turned—the bulwarks which the church defended with the fiercest pertinacity, as the most fruitful sources of wealth and power, and which the Reformers assailed with the most determined hatred—the one as the great speculative imposition, the other as the grossest practical symbol of superstition.

The prudence and firmness, with which the senate of Basle directed the vessel in the midst of such fierce disorders, have attracted the applause of historians; yet the conclusion of the struggle, which was now approaching, rather convicts that body of partiality to the old opinions,* and also of the want of that first requisite in the art of popular government, the tact to discern the exact moment for concession to popular opinion. The praise of foresight at least can scarcely be due when a long contested object, demanded by the people with a gradually increasing determination, is at length extorted by force: yet thus it was at Basle. An edict had been published a few years before, “That there should be an uniformity in the religious worship, and that on some future day a public disputation should be held on the subject of the mass, and the question of its continuance decided by vote.” Nevertheless the pa-

* Jacobus Monasteriensis, a papist, in the letter describing the disputation at Bern, and dated January 29, 1528, says, “Senatum quoque Basiliensem scis metu plebis suæ, quam incantat Œcolampadius non tam eruditione quam hypocrisi sua, nihil posse.” Thus the senate was known by the papal party to be well disposed to them.

pists continued their preaching with so much boldness and bitterness, as to make it appear that they had their supporters among the leading people in the state. This suspicion inflamed the citizens. They assembled together, and sent deputies from their body to remind the senate of the obligation of their decree. Much debate ensued with no effect, till the deputies proceeded to demand, that those senators who encouraged the papal preachings, in contempt of the decree, and to the promotion of disorder and discord, should be deprived of their dignity.

The senate altogether refused the demand; and then the people collected together, on February 8, 1529, in the Franciscan monastery; and really apprehensive that it was intended to convert their aristocratical constitution into a mere oligarchy, and considering also what was due to the glory of Christ, to public justice, and to the welfare of their posterity,* they repeated their remonstrances with less respect, at the same time occupying, though without arms, the public buildings and places. On the same evening the senate replied: "That those senators whose removal was required should refrain from voting on religious questions, but should retain their seats and voices upon all others." The citizens inferred from this, that the senate was in fact governed by a small faction within it, and that their liberties were in danger as well as their religion. Thus they became still more incensed; and then seizing arms, they took military possession of the gates and towers of the city.

A further compromise was then proposed by the senate; and while this was still under deliberation, it

* These are the words of Ecolampadius in a letter to Wolfgang Capito, in which he describes this affair.—Apud Scultet. ann. 1529. His account agrees, in all important respects, with the others.

came to pass that certain of the inhabitants, who were appointed to patrol the streets, went up into the principal church. One of them raised his spear against the statue of some saint erected there, overthrew and demolished it. The example was followed; but the instant and forcible interference of the ministers of the church prevented the completion of the work, and the assailants departed. While this scuffle was yet proceeding, an exaggerated rumour reached the body of the people who were assembled in the Forum, and they, believing that their fellow-citizens were in personal danger from the violence of the papal party, sent a body of three hundred armed men to their rescue. When these arrived, the struggle was already finished; but, that their errand might not be without some fruit, they immediately destroyed all the images remaining in the church in question, and then extended the devastation to all the others. And when the senate, in the course of these proceedings, sent forth some of its members to appease the storm, the chiefs of the rioters merely observed to them: "That, on which you have been deliberating for these three years, whether it should be done or not, we will accomplish in one hour; so that we shall not henceforward have any further difference, at least on that head."

The senate submitted: the twelve obnoxious members were dismissed to an honourable obscurity, and a decree was presently published ordaining the entire abolition both of the images and the mass,* both in the city and country. By the same instrument it was likewise enacted: "That for the better consideration of subjects pertaining both to the glory of God and the welfare of

* "Ita sævitum est in idola," says *Æcolampadius*; "ac missa expiravit præ dolore."—*Epist. Wolf. Capitoni.*

the commonwealth, the senate should thenceforward admit to its councils two hundred and sixty deputies from the people." This last provision proves that in whatever motive these tumults may have originated, they assumed in their course something of a political character; and that the people of Basle were not slow in turning the religious excitement to civil advantages. Nor was this the only instance in which the two objects were combined, in furthering the Reformation in Switzerland.

Meanwhile the citizens indulged in the wildest exultation on their double triumph; and so many were the insults heaped upon the images and crucifixes, as to make it strange, according to the sarcastic observation of Erasmus, that those holy saints, who had been wont to display such prodigies of power on very slight offences, should have refrained, in this most important emergency, from the exertion of their miraculous energies.

Erasmus was still at Basle; and the account of this affair, which he communicated at the time to his correspondent Pirckheimer, differs in no essential circumstance from that of Sleidan. He mentioned, indeed, that the ecclesiastical faction was the first which had recourse to arms, and that its greater respectability made amends for its numerical inferiority. But, though he affirmed, that among the popular party there were many foreigners, spendthrifts and persons of notorious infamy, he did not accuse them of any cruelty, or any wanton or predatory violence. Indeed, so far as can be judged from such records as remain of this transaction, the praise of greater discretion, as well as greater courage and constancy, belongs to the adherents of the Reformation.

Immediately afterwards, in spite of the courteous en-

treaties of Œcolampadius,* he took his departure. His salaries were now in danger: his credit with the great would have been compromised, had he remained any longer in that polluted residence. Indeed he was then so professedly an adherent of the papal party, that, if any event were required to mark the crisis of the triumph of the Reformation at Basle, we might find it in the secession of Erasmus. He parted, however, on good terms with his ancient friends and hosts, and left behind him the following benediction—

Jam Basilea vale! qua non urbs altera multis
Annis exhibuit gratius hospitium.
Hinc precor omnia læta tibi: simul illud, Erasmo
Hospes uti ne unquam tristior adveniat.

The year before, during the heat of the conflict, Œcolampadius married. He described that event to W. Farel in the following expressions: “Moreover, be it known to you, if it be not already known, that in the place of my departed mother the Lord has given me a wife, of sufficiently Christian feelings, poor but of respectable origin, a widow, and for some years experienced in the cross. I would, indeed, that she were somewhat older; but I have not yet observed in her any symptom of youthful petulance. Do you pray the Lord that the marriage may be happy and lasting.” With

* Erasmus mentioned this in his letter to Pirckheimer, but he felt that, as he was not a Reformer, it was time that he should quit the scene. Œcolampadius, in a letter to Simon Grynæus, wrote as follows: “No one has been forcibly expelled hence; but some, who are displeased to see the kingdom of Christ established here, have removed by preference elsewhere. Erasmus is likewise on the point of departing, out of compliment to the princes to whom he is bound by obligations; but I do not think that he is taking a final leave of us. But we do not much regard those persons, seeing that we are intending to place the university on a new and happier footing.”

this simple announcement it is proper to contrast the remarks which Erasmus addressed to his friend Adrianus on the same subject and at the same time: "Œcolampadius has lately taken a wife, rather an elegant girl. Doubtless he intends to mortify the flesh. Some call this Lutheran business a tragedy; but for my part I think it partakes much more of the character of a comedy, for I observe that all its plots and counterplots end in one invariable catastrophe—a wedding."*

* Among the chiefs of the Reformation, Melancthon, Zwingli, Luther, Spalatin, Capito, and Œcolampadius were married. Among the less distinguished evangelical pastors the practice was becoming general. At Basle, in the beginning of 1524, one Stephanus, a married minister, defended his act in public disputation; and as no one rose to confute him, and many advanced to support him, he won an easy triumph. The same occurred at Strasburg and in other places. The people decidedly encouraged the marriage of the clergy, and they may have had their reasons.

CHAPTER XXX.

REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND.—BERNE.

Berthold Haller and Sebastian Meyer laid the foundation of the Reformation at Berne—neutrality of the senate—rather, however, inclining to papacy—dissolution of the nunnery of Königsfelde—in 1525 comes a more liberal edict from the senate—edict for exercise of mutual charity—papal party recover ascendancy and take an oath of fidelity to the old observances—decision of the senate in favour of Haller—the Reformation gradually triumphs and the oath is revoked—grand conference proclaimed—Haller presses Zwingli to be present—attempts of the papists to prevent it—fail—firmness of the Bernese—the disputation opens January 7, 1528—no Catholic of any consequence present—accounts by Bucer and Jacobus Monasteriensis—the result is the conversion of the Canton, and establishment of the Ten Articles—manner of celebrating this triumph—prohibition of mercenary service—Constance, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glarus, Tokenburg follow—remarks—progress of the Swiss Reformation—indulgences—fasts—monastic life—images—mass—good policy of the papists in Switzerland—some comparison between the Swiss and Saxon divines—how far political causes occasioned the distinctions—greater progress of the Swiss than of the German Reformers—term Lutheran applied to the Swiss and disclaimed by Zwingli—his expressions—his praise of Luther—his greater consistency and moderation.

For the first three years after the appearance of Luther no city was more adverse to the new opinions than Berne. In 1520, however, they gained some footing there, and the more violent prejudices were beginning to soften under the evangelical preaching of Berthold Haller and Sebastian Meyer. Both were men of worth and piety. Haller possessed considerable learning and eloquence; but, through a just distrust in the sufficiency of his own powers, he looked to Zwingli for support and guidance.

Under those auspices the cause prospered ;* and three years afterwards the state of religion was such, as to call for the interference of the government. On June 15, 1523, it was decreed : "That, as conflicting doctrines were delivered to the people and the preachers thundered against each other, they should all of them thenceforward preach the same Gospel, namely, the doctrine revealed by God and illustrated by the prophetic and apostolical writings ; that they should propound nothing contrary to Holy Writ, whether on Luther's or on any other authority, and avoid every discourse of a seditious tendency."

About the same time one George Brunner, pastor of Landsberg, was accused of designating the Pope as the Antichrist. The senate allowed him a public defence ; he rested it entirely on the word of God ; and after due deliberation it was determined, that he had successfully replied to his adversaries, and might return to his sacred functions. By this decision the foundation was surely laid ; the preaching of the Gospel was encouraged, freedom and publicity were allowed to religious discussions ;

* There is a letter from Zwingle to Haller dated Cal. Januar., 1522, in which allusion is made to the greater progress of the Zurichers in evangelical knowledge : "Do you execute strenuously that which you require of me, that your bears, now a little wild, may begin to grow tame on hearing the doctrine of Christ. But you must set about this work with the greatest mildness ; for you cannot treat yours as we can ours. The ears of yours are yet too tender, and must not be at once wounded by any very biting truth, which I suppose to have been the meaning of Christ when he forbade to cast pearls before swine, lest they should turn about on you and tear you, and contract a perpetual horror of the Gospel of Christ. These wild beasts are to be handled more gently . . . till at length, overcome by our patient and intrepid constancy, they may become tractable." The reply of Haller to his "*integerrimus Præceptor*" at once acknowledges and proves the influence, and even the authority, of the latter.—Gerdesius *Monum. Antiq.*, tom. ii. num. xiii.

and the word of God was established as the only arbiter of controversy and the only test of truth.

The Orders of the Helvetic body, assembled at Berne in the course of this year, issued some angry proclamations against Zwingle. Their great demonstration at Lucerne, on Jan. 26, 1524, has been already described. These efforts no doubt retarded the progress of the Reformation and prolonged the struggle. Thus we perceive, that at the end of April in this year, the Senate published a decree, prohibiting on the one hand the marriage of the clergy, the pernicious use of meats during Lent, and any disrespect to the mediatory office of the saints; on the other, the maintenance of concubines by the ministers of Christ, and all further traffic in indulgences. A dispute which followed between Meyer and one Heim, a Dominican, respecting the satisfaction made by Christ for the sins of mankind, occasioned another interference on the part of the government, and called forth a third edict on the subject of religion. Both parties were, for peace and quietness' sake (*umb frid und ruwen willen*) ejected from the city. Images and fasts were protected, religious contentions were prohibited, and the points in dispute were ordered to be brought at once before the magistracy. Heretical and antisciptural books were to be neither bought nor sold, but burnt. All factious and turbulent meetings were forbidden. At the same time, a just indignation was expressed against those obnoxious imposts, which, under the various pretexts of excommunication, indulgence, dispensation, &c., were exacted by the Roman See; and it was promised that, after due deliberation with the other cantons, measures should be taken to remove them.

This decree was published on the 22nd of November, and its spirit was decidedly papal. Yet a few months

earlier (on the 10th of June) a great practical triumph had been obtained by the principles of the Reformation, in the dissolution of the nunnery of Königsfelde. The inmates of this institution, having received new instructions respecting Christian liberty from the writings of Luther and Zwingle, expressed a strong desire to return to a secular life. They were the daughters of the nobles and principal citizens, and as they persisted in their petition, and as their ardour and unanimity seemed only to be increased by the obstacles interposed and the pretexts suggested by the government, it was found necessary at length to yield. And the decree which restored them to liberty contained a general provision for the liberation of all who, with the consent of their parents, might desire it. It was further enacted that no female should thenceforward be received into a convent till after her seventeenth year, and that she should then pass three further probationary years, before she took the indissoluble vow. The bishop of Constance and many other nobles made great exertions to prevent or counteract this decree, chiefly with the object of preventing the apostates from reclaiming their forfeited shares in the family temporalities. But the perseverance of the parties most interested, aided by the moderation of the Senate, finally prevailed; and the ladies were married in due season, without any detriment to the cause of religion or to the welfare of the republic.

Early in the succeeding year (1525) another edict was published for the regulation of religious affairs, of a much more extensive and liberal character. It contained thirty-five articles, and among them were the following: "That purgatory, canonical hours, anniversaries and such like matters were open to individual opinion and practice; that married priests might retain their benefices; that the sale of indulgences should be

absolutely prevented ; that no foreigner, even members of the court of Rome not excepted, should possess any benefice within the canton of Berne ; that the clergy, without respect to the peculiarity of their sacred character, should be subject to the same jurisdiction and the same penalties as the laity ; that no ecclesiastics or religious establishments should purchase land, or other hereditary possessions, without the permission of the government.

Still, notwithstanding these checks, the Roman Catholic party was very powerful ; and the dissension was carried on with so much bitterness on both sides, that on May 8 the Senate published another decree, prohibiting those animosities and enjoining the exercise of mutual charity. We are assured that this injunction was by some received with great satisfaction. But if there were any who really dreamed, that the storm of passions infuriated by sectarian strife could be allayed by an edict, that charity could be breathed into the hearts of the religious combatants, or conflicting opinions and feelings reconciled, by a proclamation, they presently discovered their great mistake. The differences became more inflamed, and the breach which separated the parties widened day by day.

The decree of Baden produced an immediate effect at Berne. The papal party gained a temporary ascendancy. They succeeded in obtaining an official act of adhesion to the ancient religion ; and, to provide still further security for its power and permanence, they bound themselves by an oath to enforce it. It commanded that dissensions should cease and the papists and Zwinglians abstain from invectives ; that no books should be written against the established faith ; that priests who were married, or might thereafter marry, should, if foreigners, be expelled from the republic ; that no sort of change should be permitted

in matters of religion. The majority both of the nobles and the people are said to have undertaken this solemn obligation. Yet a dispute immediately followed, which ended in the introduction, and by authority too, of a very essential innovation. Haller had suspended the celebration of mass for the six preceding months, and on his return from the conference of Baden he was commanded by the lesser Senate to restore it. He claimed to be heard in apology before the larger Senate; and his demand, after some difficulty, was accorded. There he persisted with respectful firmness in his disobedience, and resigned a canonry which he had for some time held. Meanwhile the people, by whom he was much beloved, assembled in multitudes and expressed their determination not to be deprived of their Christian pastor. The Senate decided accordingly: That he should resign his dignity, but continue in his ministerial functions with a sufficient salary, and that the celebration of mass should not be required of him. The popular commotion had doubtless much influence in procuring this decree; which was indeed, as far as it went, a retractation of the sworn manifesto so lately issued, and a step towards the events which immediately followed.

The seven Catholic Cantons, perceiving these symptoms of instability in the citizens of Berne, offered to the authorities to send deputies to that city, to aid in the maintenance of the old religion. The government returned, on the 7th of March, 1527, a bold and independent reply: That the embassy proposed was quite unnecessary, since the people of Berne were sufficient for the management of their own affairs, and the care of their religion was of all others most especially their own. They presently took three steps, which evinced that independence, and at the same time showed that the transient

reaction, occasioned by the disputation at Baden, was already passed. They revoked the sacred engagement, into which they had entered on the preceding year. They confirmed the edict of 1523, by which they had established the Bible as the only rule and text book for their preachers;* and they decreed that a public disputation should be held in their city during the winter following, for the final decision of the disputed questions.

To this great conference they summoned the bishops of Constance, Basle, Sion and Lausanne, together with all their most eminent theologians, on pain of forfeiting such of their possessions as lay in the Bernese territory. They commanded all their own divines to be present, and established the books of the Old and New Testaments as the only objects of appeal. At the same time, they published ten articles, to be maintained by the advocates of the reformed churches against all opponents. The articles were in substance: That the church had no head but Christ; that it sprang from the word of God, and subsisted in that alone; that traditions were only binding when they agreed with God's written word; that Christ was a sufficient expiation for the sins of the whole world; that there was no Scriptural proof of the real and corporal manducation of the body and blood of Christ; that the sacrifice of the mass was opposed to Scripture and insulting to the sacrifice of Christ; that there was no other intercessor between God and man, except Christ; that the existence of a purgatory could not be proved from Holy Writ; that the worship of statues and images was contrary to Scripture; that marriage was forbidden to no order of men; that, since

* Gerdesius publishes the original edict. Monument. Antiq. tom. ii. num. xxi.; and also the convocation of the meeting (num. xxii.)—both in Swiss-German; together with the ten articles.

fornication was expressly denounced in Scripture, it was a vice least of all becoming the sacerdotal order.

Haller, prudently reluctant to sustain the whole burden of this disputation, wrote very earnestly to solicit the support of Zwingli; he requested him to undertake the defence of the ten articles, with free permission to make any alteration in them that might seem fit to him. "All pious persons here feel the strongest confidence that you will not be absent. You know how much depends on this republic. If we should sink under the task, how disgraceful would that be to us, how detrimental to the Gospel! I know and have experienced, how dear to you are the honour of God and His Word, and the salvation of Berne and of the whole Helvetic body; and thus I feel assured of your presence on this occasion, to the great advantage of the whole Christian commonwealth and the scandal of its enemies. . . . All will be prepared for you, provided you be prepared, as we all trust you will. Hasten your reply, and spare no expense, that we may have proof how certainly we may count on you. For the whole turns on this, that you do not fail us. You understand me. Perform what our whole republic expects from you. I send you our conclusions, which you may amplify, curtail or augment, at your discretion." Zwingli, as well as Oecolampadius, promised his assistance. In fact the crisis was much too important—the success of the Reformation throughout the whole of Switzerland was too deeply involved in this proceeding—to dispense with the strenuous exertions of its two great supporters.

The opposite party foresaw its consequences, and made great efforts to prevent it. The Catholics of Germany addressed to the government of Berne, in the name of the Emperor, a strong though tardy remonstrance, dissuasive of the meeting. The reply was firm

and respectful : That many of those invited were already arrived; that the religious dissensions were becoming day by day more intolerable; that the princes of Christendom took no measures to compose them; that the authorities had accordingly deemed it their duty to investigate the truth, and to that end had decreed this conference.

The papal cantons were not idle or indifferent spectators. They too urged their united remonstrances with great earnestness and energy: they reminded the Bernese of the solemn obligations into which they had entered; they referred to the disputation of Baden, of which none had been more zealous promoters; they disputed the right of them, or any other state, to introduce any change into religious concerns without the consent of a general council; they implored them not to be seduced into those novelties by the influence of a few foreigners, but to adhere to the religion of their fathers and forefathers, under the shadow of which they had achieved so many glorious triumphs, and extended so widely the boundaries of their dominions. To this plausible appeal the men of Berne replied inflexibly : That the religion of Christ, that the salvation of souls, that the peace of the republic, were at stake; and that, from a resolution thus grounded, no reasons could possibly disturb them. Other means of persuasion and intimidation were then attempted. The bishops employed all their power and influence for the same purpose. Passports were refused to the evangelical ministers; menaces were not spared;* but all were equally vain. In fact, during the latter months of 1527, the

* See Bucer's *Epist. Dedicat. ad Magistratus et Evangel. Ministros Bernenses præmiss.* *Commentar. in Evangel. Johannis*, in which he gives a summary of the disputation. The Acts were likewise published by authority. In Gerdesius (*Monument. Antiq.*, tom. ii. No. xxiv.) we find the papal account of the disputation, as contained in a letter of one Jacobus Monasteriensis, a priest, who was present.

evangelical principles had made such rapid and manifest progress among all classes of the inhabitants, that any attempts to arrest it, whether by coercive edicts or foreign interference, would have immediately ended in bloodshed.

The disputation opened on the appointed day, which was January 7, 1528. No bishop was present; but more than three hundred and fifty evangelical teachers were there, with Zwingli and Œcolampadius at their head. There came, besides, deputies from Zurich, Basle, Schaffhausen, Glarus, St. Gall, Mühlhausen, within the league; and from Strasburg, Ulm, Constance, Augsburg, Lindau, and other cities without it. All these were previously received and entertained at Zurich, and arrived at Berne in the company of the doctors and deputies from that city; and so suspicious were its inhabitants of papal treachery, and so anxious about the safety of their own Reformer, that they did not permit Zwingli to quit their territory without the escort of an armed force.

Vadianus, consul of St. Gall, was appointed president; and that publicity might be ensured and a faithful account taken of the proceedings, four secretaries were deputed on oath, to record everything that might pass. Perfect freedom of debate was allowed to both parties; yet in such manner, that all arguments were to be derived directly from Scripture, and all mere verbal disputes, and vain and contentious subtleties, to be immediately repressed. Each party selected its own disputants; and the forms, rather than the reality, of controversy were maintained during eighteen days, and six and thirty sessions. The articles proposed for deliberation were successively debated,* but in most unequal combat; for while Zwingli

* According to Bucer's account, the Papists urged, among other matters, that it was proper to wait for the decision of a council, or in other

and Œcolampadius, Capito and Bucer, the flower of the Swiss and Strasburg Reformation, were arrayed on one side, defending the positions of Haller with much solid erudition and great and practised talents, the opposite cause was left to the feeble protection of men without talents or learning,* or any sort of reputation or

words, of the church; that the Gospels themselves were only received by the determination of the church, which was consequently the judge of every dispute; that the Bohemians were divided into various sects; that there were already points of difference between the Swiss and Lutherans—all which proceeded from the rejection of the authority of the church. To this it was replied: That the righteous man lived by his own faith, not by that of popes or councils; that consequently, not only every church, but every individual should be his own interpreter of the will and promises of God; that the doctrines and observances of the Romanists were in manifest opposition to the first principles of Christianity; that the Scriptures were in every one's hands, and there was no want of faithful expositors, but that the receiving them with faith was not the gift of any council, or any created thing; that the Father, through Christ, was the only dispenser of faith, and that He dispensed it to those elected before the world began; that in the Gospel was the treasure of eternal life, though Jews were chosen to receive it, &c.

* Jacobus Monasteriensis (apud Gerdes., l. c.) writes with feeling on this subject:—"Sic nos decet poenas dare contemptarum literarum et neglectus studiorum. . . . De hæreticis forte cupis ut scribam. . . . Facilis illis pugna fuit, cum nulli instructi coram starent antagonistæ. Ita paratos non vidi, quin si dextri homines adfuissent et in Scripturis versati, si non in omnibus illos vicissent, remorati tamen fuissent in dubio illorum conatus. Oh si vel unus Erasmus commissus illis fuisset! vidi enim sæpe de responsionibus inter eos non convenire." After speaking of Zwingle's vehemence and fervency as rather injuring than aiding his cause, he proceeds:—"Doctior tamen hæc bellua est quam putabam. Nasutus Œcolampadius in prophetis ille, et Hebræa lingua præstare videtur; sed nihil illi ubertate ingenii et exponendi perspicuitate: tamen in Græcis si non major, par illi. Quid nunc impostor Capito valeat, non potuit dijudicari: pauca enim locutus est. Plura Saphaticus Bucerus, qui, si eruditione et linguarum scientia par esset Zwinglio et Œcolampadio, nobis magis metuendus esset. Ita difficile commovetur bestiola, et satis luculenter sua proponit. . . . Oh tempora, oh mores, oh nostram

authority, not comparable to Eck and Faber—Alexius Grad, Tregarius, or Trægerinus, Buchstab, Ægidius—names which appear on no other occasion in the pages of history. An argument so conducted, before a tribunal already predisposed towards the stronger party, could have but one result ; and if we except an attempt made by Althamer, a Lutheran doctor of Nuremberg, acting under papal influence, to disturb the unanimity of the Reformers on the doctrine of the real presence, there was no feature of any remarkable interest in the whole disputation.

The immediate consequence was the entire abolition of the papacy throughout the whole of that extensive canton. Nor was the triumph of the Reformers attended by any respect for the opinions of those who differed from them, whether Papists or Lutherans. The Ten Articles were established as the creed of all ; the citizens were commanded, without exception, to withdraw their obedience from the episcopal authorities ; deacons, pastors, and all other ministers of the church, were absolved from their oaths of allegiance to the bishop ; altars, images, and masses were abolished throughout the territory—the same expressions, which repudiated transubstantiation, involving also a condemnation of the doctrine of Luther ; together with these, departed the long list of pontifical observances and ceremonies, such as anniversaries of the saints, dedications of churches, the use of sacred costumes, fast-days and feast-days ; a new form of worship was published ; and the most important monastic establishments were converted into schools, which were thenceforward supported by the monastic revenues.

socordiam ! quam facile potuisset hoc malum caveri, si studiosorum quam scortorum nostri Episcopi amantiores essent. . . . Nisi nos excindi volumus, ad eas artes nobis confugiendum est, quibus primum crevit Ecclesia, eruditionem et mores aliqua saltem specie laudabiles."

The citizens of Berne consecrated this great victory by acts of mercy. Two prisoners condemned to death were pardoned; others who had been banished from the republic were recalled. "If some mortal king or prince," they said one to another, "were to make his entry into our city, we should remit, if it could be safely done, the sentence of the condemned. And now the King of kings, the Prince of Souls, the Son of God, who is at the same time our own brother, has come in to us; and can we better celebrate the advent of Him, who brought us pardon and remission of eternal punishment, than by pardoning those who have trespassed against us?"

At the same time they exhibited a more permanent proof of moral and political regeneration, and offered a still more glorious sacrifice to the Prince of Peace, by prohibiting all mercenary service to foreign powers, and renouncing the sale of the blood of their fellow-citizens; and when they next proceeded to erect a column, and inscribe it with letters of gold, for the perpetual commemoration of their victory over the pontifical superstition, they perceived not how unnecessary was that act; seeing that they raised a far nobler and more durable monument when they restored the Gospel, not in name only, but in spirit and practice, and turned its blessed precepts into instruments of civilization and humanity—into the means of amending, not private principles only, but public and political morality.

Whatever was the effect which the disputation at Baden produced in favour of the papal party, it was more than compensated at Berne. The citizens of Constance, Schaffhausen, St. Gall, Glarus, Tokenburg, and other places, in which the struggle was till that time undecided, now boldly declared their adhesion to the Reformation, and gave the customary proofs of their evangelical zeal by abolishing images, altars, and the mass. At Con-

stance the work had been slowly progressing during five or six years, under the direction of two pious ministers, Blaurer and Zwickius. Some edicts had been issued against fornication and adultery, which are recorded to have given great scandal to the influential body of canons; and many heats were excited and much bitter dissension, until the scale was turned at Berne in favour of the new doctrines.

At Schaffhausen the protection of the senate was promised, as early as 1523, to an evangelical minister named Hofmeister, and the preaching of the pure Gospel permitted. The legates, who were present at the second disputation at Zurich, brought back with them strong convictions of the truth of Zwingli's propositions, and diffused them among their fellow-citizens. Œcolampadius was consulted as to the manner of proceeding. Presently the abbot and his monks quitted their monastery and married, on the assurance of certain pensions, the tithes of other revenues of the foundation being given over to the civil government. An abbess and her spiritual daughters went forth, on the same condition, to the enjoyments of a secular life.* This was in 1524. During the succeeding years a gradual advancement was made under the moderate guidance of Erasmus Ritter, a discreet and learned man, till at length, in 1529, the Reformers completed their triumph; and "the great Lord God of Schaffhausen," an image of prodigious magnitude, was consigned, along with its less distinguished companions, amidst great popular exultation, to the consuming flame. On this occasion the men of Schaffhausen received an epistle of congratulation from those of Zurich; for this city continued to disseminate, as far as it was able, the principles which it

* Scultet., ann. 1524.

had first planted and ripened, to watch over the progress of the work which was peculiarly its own, and to assert its proper position as the Wittemberg of Switzerland.

The Swiss Reformation began, like that in Saxony, by an attack on indulgences—that among all the abuses of the Church which was most obnoxious, as affecting the greatest multitudes of people, and aiming with the least disguise at the most sordid object. The circumstances of the attack were indeed somewhat different; but the very fact, that the bishop in Switzerland abetted the reformer, from whatsoever motive, was still a proof the more, that that favourite outwork of the papal citadel was no longer defensible. It fell almost without a struggle; and that, which in Germany was a fierce and noisy conflict, was a mere skirmish and prolusion among the Swiss.

But, having once effected an entrance, the soldiers of the Gospel proceeded to the assault upon other and somewhat more tenable positions. First they turned their wrath against the mass of unscriptural and vexatious observances which most sensibly harassed them, especially the restriction on meats—matters in which their daily comforts were concerned, which pressed most inquisitorially upon all, and most of all upon the multitude, who were too poor to purchase dispensations.

The monastic system stood next in order, and some of Zwingle's earliest efforts were directed against it. The egress of monks and nuns, which, so far as we are informed, was voluntary, was one of the first triumphs of his principles, and doubtless it was a great political advantage to have effected this; for the revenues were not at Zurich, as in some other countries, confiscated for the immediate profit of the government, or of underserving individuals, but faithfully applied, after a just regard to vested interests, to the maintenance of the

ministers of religion, to the establishment of schools for the poor, and other pious and charitable purposes.

The images were next assailed. The most manifest objects of superstitious reverence, they attracted the fiercest indignation of the severe evangelical Christian : yet was it not easy to overthrow them at once, owing to the general prevalence of that very reverence. Some caution, some little respect for misguided consciences, not the less earnest and zealous for being misguided, was required for a time, but for a short time only. Perfect freedom of discussion being permitted, the impostures, which had been so long practised in honour of those figures, were exposed, the miracles, to which they pretended, were exploded, and the indignation of the dupes themselves was presently roused against them : so that they fell with universal approbation, and in some places not so much by the command of an enlightened government as by the very hands of their most credulous worshippers. The multitude is never so fierce in its vengeance, as when it believes that it has been deluded.

Lastly fell the mass. This was an object likewise endeared to the people by ancestral usage, and the notion of peculiar holiness and supernatural protection attested by miracles. The question besides was in its nature more speculative than the others, and therefore the reasons for its abolition were less intelligible to the vulgar. However, the previous successes prepared the way for this ; and in every instance, in which the other objects had been achieved, the mass followed in its own season, and by its overthrow consummated the triumph of the Reformation.

It was not that the Papists contended either timidly or unskilfully. The Catholic cantons not only maintained a vigorous, united, and very judicious resistance, but adopted at the same time the most artful of all expedients—a pretended zeal for reform. They professed great

anxiety to remove all proved abuses, to satisfy every reasonable demand for innovation. They even indicated certain very unpopular usurpations of the Church, and promised to co-operate in up-rooting them. The show which they presented and the promises which they held out were fairer than any similar demonstrations by the German Papists, and the fairer, possibly the more false, certainly the more dangerous. At Rome a milder policy was adopted towards the Swiss insurgents. Adrian, while he was insulting Luther almost in the language of Luther, was lisping out insidious compliments to Zwingli. Clement pursued the same course. And here it was unquestionably the wisest; for whatever anathemas he might have thought proper to send forth would not in Switzerland have found any to enforce them; they would probably have irritated his supporters. And to these causes it may in a great measure be ascribed, that of a country, seemingly so well prepared by political independence for the reception of the principles of religious liberty, so large a portion continued faithful in allegiance to Rome.

The views of Zwingli in regard to a forcible resistance to the imperial mandates were bolder than those of the Saxon divines. In 1530, Charles having threatened Augsburg and Memmingen with violence, if they persisted in their apostacy, their ministers consulted Zwingli on the duty of the government in such a contingency. He replied: Confess the truth boldly; and promise obedience to the Emperor, if he will leave you liberty of conscience, unless, indeed, he shall succeed in convicting you of error by the word of God, in a free, impartial and public conference. If he shall refuse this, then you will reply: That you are grieved to see him seduced by a false zeal, so as to imagine that he has any authority over your souls and your faith—authority which no religious Emperor will ever claim, and which, if he should

claim, no man ought to concede to him ; that you are resolved to endure all, rather than submit in such matters to any power but that of God.

Meanwhile, it should be remembered that Zwingli was delivering his response from a place of comparative security, and little liable to the dangers which threatened the pastors of an imperial city. For a free citizen of Zurich, acting with the entire approbation of his own government, the ban of the empire had no terrors. While any violent intervention in the affairs of Switzerland would probably have united all the cantons in defence of their national privileges, and created, perhaps, an impression favourable to the religious principles of the State, against which the imperial aggression had been directed.

The same independence was one principal reason why the Reformation, wherever it did succeed, was carried farther in Switzerland than was proposed or approved by Luther. The hatred, felt by the Swiss for all that they held to be unscriptural, acknowledged no restraint short of the entire extirpation of the abuses ; and thus they overthrew, not only indulgences and fasts, celibacy, images and masses, but even some ceremonies and practices, which might well be deemed indifferent, such as the religious use of organs and bells. With them the object was to efface every vestige of the ancient system, even in externals. And in like manner they were more courageous in the investigation of doctrine, as appears from the grand difference on the question of the Eucharist, which will be treated presently.

Thus Luther gradually assumed, as events proceeded, a sort of middle position between the Swiss and the Papists, rejecting many tenets and observances of the latter, censuring the too violent innovations of the former, and renouncing the communion of both. Yet, in the

first instance, the course pursued by him was not materially different from that of Zwingli; and before the outbreak of the Sacramentarian dissensions, it was not unusual to apply the term Lutheran to the Swiss, as well as to the German, reformers. Through the greater celebrity of the Saxon for good or for evil, that appellation conveyed a higher praise from the mouth of a friend, and a more invidious stigma from that of an enemy. Zwingli was far from courting the name. On many occasions he disclaimed not only all personal connection, but all designed co-operation, with the German divines, still less would he admit any subordination of his mission, or ministry, to theirs.

“In the year 1516, before the name of Luther was so much as known in our country, I began to preach Christ’s gospel. How then can I be justly reproached with being a Lutheran? . . . For two years, during which I was engaged in the simple study of the Scriptures, I had never heard the very name of Luther. But it is a mere artifice of the Papists to designate me and others as Lutherans. If they say you are a Lutheran because you preach what Luther writes, my answer is: I preach as Paul writes; why not rather call me a disciple of Paul? I preach the Word of Christ; why not rather call me a Christian? In my opinion, Luther is an excellent champion of God, who searches the Scriptures with more industry and zeal than has been employed in the cause during the last thousand years. In respect of the bold and manly spirit with which he has attacked the Pope of Rome, he has never yet been equalled. But whose work is that? Is it the work of God, or of Luther? Ask Luther himself, and he will tell you that it is the work of God. Wherefore do you ascribe to Luther the doctrines which he himself ascribes to God? . . .

“Good Christians! suffer not the glorious name of

Christ to be changed into the name of Luther; for Luther has not died for us, but only teaches us to know Him, through whom alone we may obtain salvation. . . . As Luther preaches Christ, so far he does exactly what I do, although, and God be praised for it, far greater multitudes are led to God by his means, than by means of myself and my friends. But this is according to the measure which is given to every one of us by God himself. . . . I will not bear any other name than that of my Master, Jesus Christ, whose soldier I am.

“There cannot be any man who has a higher esteem for Luther than myself. But I declare before God and men, that in all my days I never have written a letter to him, nor he to me, neither have we caused any to be written. I have purposely abstained from such correspondence, not through fear, but because I was desirous that all men should thus perceive how uniform is the Spirit of God; since we, who are so far removed from each other, and are without any communication, are yet agreed in the doctrines which we preach—although I am not worthy to be compared unto Luther, for every man acts according to the ability which God bestows.”

Even during the heat of the controversy, Zwingle, while he treated with little deference either the arguments or the authority of his great antagonist, did not refuse him the praise which was really his due, nor was it a cold and reluctant eulogy that he offered. He compared him to Hercules going forth alone and unassisted on his labours—to David, marching against the gigantic power of Rome.

“At a time when there were not a few who understood religion as well as you, yet was there not one, in the whole camp of Israel, who dared to offer himself to the danger; in such terror did they stand of that vast Goliath, menacing them with the weight of his arms and strength.

Then, even then, dost thou, thou alone faithful, David, to this anointed by the Lord, gird on thine arms; and first, contending with the foe according to his own fashion, thou puttest forth disputations, and paradoxes, and Gordian knots; but presently casting off these impediments, choosest out stones from the celestial stream and poisest them for the battle; and then whirlest thy sling with so much dispatch and force, as to stretch the unseemly monster at his length before thee. Thou alone wast Hercules, seeking for danger wherever it might be found, and facing it. Thou hast slain the Roman boar, thou hast crushed Antæus, born of earth; for who ever demonstrated, from the apostolic fountains, the enmity of the spirit and the flesh more clearly and purely than thou . . . ?”*

It is by such generous effusions that Zwingle has deserved the praise of candour and moderation: for though in the field of controversy no one was more keen and bitter than he, yet, when contrasted with the impetuous sallies of Luther, even his severest attacks appear to be tempered with mercy. But he has earned this praise, not only through a less irritable and better governed temper, but also through the more studied polish of his style. He was not ignorant of the art of vituperation.†

* Yet Zwingle closed this panegyric with a warning: “Yet I warn thee, take heed lest, through some wanton woman’s love, thou lay aside thy lion’s skin and club. . . . We are one body; Christ is the head: Luther is one eye; but let him not grudge to the ear the office that belongs to the ear. These allegories, my Luther, I propound to thee with good intent. It is for thee to understand them all with candour.”—*Amica Exegesis, i. e. Expositio Eucharistiæ negotii. Ad M. Lutherum. Prid. Cal. Mart. 1527.*

† “Why do you call that a lie, which is a mistake? Have the words mistake and lie indeed the same meaning? I will tell you, Luther, and without any lie, what sort of men are properly called liars—men, who call the truth a lie; men, who assert in public and before the world that which they know in their closets to be otherwise; men, who proceed against

By some plausible praises of some notorious excellence in his antagonist he could give efficacy to the sarcasm which followed, and convey the sting without the clamour of reproach, after the fashion of a more civilised, but not less deadly, warfare. But some such arms were necessary for the purpose, which he was commissioned to accomplish. Had he not been capable of inspiring fear, he would never have been the author of a Reformation.

the divine oracles with seditious clamours and calumnies; men, who, in the confidence of their own authority, contravene the authority of Scripture; men, who corrupt the spirit of Scripture and obtrude on it a sense which it cannot endure—these are the men whose course is marked by lies. . . .”—*Ibidem*.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SACRAMENTARIAN CONTROVERSY.

Zwingle's difficulties as to the corporal presence—and consequent inquiries—the first expressions of his opinion private—prejudices on which the papal doctrine rested—and Zwingle's caution—premature explosion of Carlostadt—his opinion adopted by Zwingle—Zwingle's work concerning True and False Religion—he is attacked by Pomeranus—his moderate reply—Æcolampadius on the Genuine Exposition of the Words of the Lord—the book referred to Erasmus—his cautious reply—the Syngamma of the divines of Swabia—Antisyngamma of Æcolampadius—Zwingle's defence of him—Luther defends the Syngamma—variations in the opinions of the Swiss—Zwingle's address to Luther—his Exegesis—two sermons by Æcolampadius—various calumnies against the Swiss—Luther on the Ubiquity of Christ's Body—on the use of the doctrine of the bodily presence—remarks—his treatise Against the Fanatical Spirits of the Sacramentaries—some positions contained in it—his Great Confession concerning the Lord's Supper—specimen of his arguments on the person of Christ—the controversy becomes more abstruse as it proceeds—divines of Strasburg—Bucer—Capito—mission of Chazellius to Luther—Luther's reply—Bucer's confession of faith on this point—his dialogue between Sebastus and Arbegastus—state of the controversy—the greater blame with Luther and his followers—extracts from his correspondence—his letters to Hausman, Justus Jonas, and others—his complaints against Zwingle.

As soon as Zwingle began to reflect with boldness upon the doctrines of the church, and to examine them by no other test than the written law of God, his attention was of course attracted by the startling tenet of transubstantiation. He considered how clearly it was revealed that the body of Christ had been withdrawn from the earth, whither there was no reason to expect its return until the final judgment. Besides, he could discover no salu-

tary use in the corporal manducation. The great purpose of salvation, in his mind, was accomplished by the death of Christ, by faith in His atoning merits, and by that repentance which is the fruit of faith—the eating of His actual body and blood, even if it could be shown that the sacramental elements were such, could still be no essential part in the work of justification. Accordingly, he turned to investigate the question with an unprejudiced mind, first inquiring, whether the style of the sacred writings and the idioms of oriental language were such as to justify a metaphorical interpretation of the passage on which the Roman doctrine rested ; next, searching out the opinions of the most respectable fathers, and from them collecting the original doctrine of the church.

Both these inquiries conducted him to the same conclusion, and this he presently communicated, in conversation or private correspondence, to sundry learned Reformers. He then discovered that he was not singular in his opinion. John Rhodius, George Saganus, a doctor in Holland named Honius,* and Henry Bullinger, avowed, as early as September, 1523, that they were already imbued with it ; and many others had doubtless arrived, by the unrestricted use of their Bible and their reason, if not at any positive assurance respecting the manner of the real presence, at least at a state of disbelief in the dogma of the church. Thus he felt assured that he should find some minds prepared to receive his arguments on the subject, whenever he might think it expedient to broach them. Yet was he not hasty in this matter. Unlike the impetuous Carlostadt, he suppressed for a while, and recommended others to suppress, the premature discovery. He perceived the difficulty and

* Cornelii Honii, Batavi, Epistola. Apud Gerdes. tom. i. Monumenta Antiquitatis, No. xxiii.

even danger of the undertaking. The sacred importance which the church had so long attached to its own belief; the especial exertions of the ecclesiastics to impress it upon the people; the ceremonies by which it was peculiarly recommended; the stupendous miracles by which it was continually and everywhere proclaimed—had fixed it deeply in the affections of the people.

Besides, the very nature of the doctrine itself adapted it singularly to retain its hold on an ignorant and superstitious generation. The notion once impressed upon the multitude that, when they celebrated one of the sacraments of their church they actually swallowed the real body and blood—the very person of their God—was too intensely exciting, too attractive to their imagination, too closely connected with their senses, to be abandoned without great reluctance. We might indeed wonder how it was found possible to obtain so general a credence for a dogma, than which, in its popular sense, no more audacious paradox was ever obtruded on the credulity of man; but once received, once impressed on the belief, once embraced as an essential truth, it became so entirely essential, so predominant, so engrossing a truth, as to take almost exclusive possession of the soul, and to throw a shade of comparative insignificance over every other tenet. To be deprived of this conviction, to be assured that the consecrated elements, hitherto revered and adored as the very body of the Divinity, were no more than bread and wine, unchanged by the sacerdotal consecration either in substance or accident, was, in the vulgar mind, to part with the portion of religion most nearly touching both feelings and practice. “That they were robbed of their God,” was the first impression produced upon the ignorant devotees; and those, who had nourished that ignorance and found their profit in it, the chiefs and champions of the system, to which that

dogma was so necessary, united in one great confederacy to propagate the cry.

Zwingle foresaw this resistance; and he proposed to surmount it by forming a secret party in favour of the new opinion, before he should venture openly to propound it. Accordingly he caused private communications on the subject to be made to many learned men in France, as well as Germany; so that those, who could not at once receive his doctrine, might at least be brought to examine and reflect on it. But while he was laying this train with so much care and forethought, Carlostadt, from another quarter, without any consultation with him, began his premature and ill-conducted aggression.* Then, and not till then, Zwingle addressed an epistle to Matthew Albert, preacher of Reutlingen, who was already engaged in a private controversy on the subject, to this effect—that the opinion of Carlostadt appeared, upon the whole, probable both to himself, to Leo Judæ and to others; but that, in his manner of maintaining it, he had given offence, as well by his unseasonable levity as by the obscurity of his reasoning; and that the eating of the body of Christ was in fact nothing more, than to believe that it had died for man. He confirmed this position by four arguments, and concluded by solemnly conjuring his correspondent not to communicate his letter to any one who was not sincere in the faith of Christ Jesus. It was dated November 16, 1524, and it is the earliest published expression of its author's opinion on that question.

It appears from this, that he was still unwilling to proclaim it before the world. But the time for concealment was now passed. The secret transpired and reached the

* The name of his principal work is “Von dem Widerchristlichem missbrauch des Herren brodt und kelch—On the Antichristian Abuse of the Lord's bread and cup.”


ears of Luther. In the very following month the latter vented his consternation in a letter to Amsdorf: "Nothing befalls us which is not cause for humiliation. The poison of Carlostadt spreads in every direction. Zwingli has given his assent to the opinion; so have Leo Judæ and many others, who persist in asserting that the bread in the sacrament is merely bread, like that in the shops . . ." At the same time (Dec. 15, 1524) he wrote his German epistle to the Reformers of Strasburg, warning them with his usual earnestness against the surrounding infection, and visiting the sacramentarian doctrine and the fanaticism of Munzer and his colleagues with the same condemnation. In the same spirit he published, early in the following year, his "Book against the Celestial Prophets," of which the violence justifies the remark of Scultetus, that if the controversy of the sacrament was first moved by Carlostadt, the war of the sacrament as certainly originated with Luther.

Zwingli published, about the same time, his great work "Concerning True and False Religion,"* in which he treated the subject of the Eucharist according to his own views, but with much conciseness. To supply this deficiency he subjoined an Appendix, in the August following, which may be considered as his first decided movement in assertion of his opinion. John Bugenhagen, the Pomeranian, was his first opponent. A

* "De Vera et Falsa Religione," A.D. 1525, dedicated to Francis I. In the course of this work the errors of the papists and the writings of Eck and Emser are the chief objects of attack. Neither are the Anabaptists spared, through their insubordinate and seditious spirit. The authorities had forbidden these to preach their doctrines. They had replied, God must be obeyed rather than man. Zwingli argues warmly against this plea, forgetting, for the moment, how naturally it arose from the first principles of the Reformation, and how serviceable it might be against a papal persecutor.

letter, addressed to John Hesse, which he published at this time, "against the new error of the Sacramentaries," was directed for the most part against the arguments of Zwingli. The latter immediately replied (on Oct. 23, 1525); and after urging various reasons in support of his opinion, he concluded by deprecating any contest with his evangelical brethren; he admonished Pomeranus and his associates that they ought at least to abstain from personalities, and maintain their cause by rational and scriptural argument, not by tribunitian clamours. He reminded him that there were foes enough for them both in the pontifical camp; and at the same time so strongly pressed his opposition to the Lutheran tenet, as to declare his conviction "that Antichrist could not be altogether put to flight, unless the error of consubstantiation were routed along with him."

Meanwhile, Oecolampadius was preaching the same doctrine at Basle; and finding that he was thus acquiring the not very honourable distinction of "an adherent of Carlostadt," he determined to proclaim and defend his own opinions: accordingly he produced his treatise "On the Genuine Exposition of the Words of the Lord, This is my Body." In this celebrated work, after tracing the papal tenet to the books of Peter Lombard, the master of the sentences, he asserted the metaphorical sense, and urged in its favour the authority of the most eminent and ancient among the fathers. He confuted some of the arguments of his opponents; he repelled the calumny, already promulgated from the pulpits of the church, that whoever denied the oral manducation denied at the same time the truth of the Gospels, and the divinity of Christ, and the whole substance of Christianity: and finally, he confirmed his own interpretation with much acuteness of reasoning and scriptural erudition.



The senate of Basle, somewhat perplexed by the appearance of so grave a defence of the doctrine from so respectable an author, requested the opinion of Erasmus, then residing in that city, before they permitted the publication of the work. He replied: "That he had read the book of *Æcolampadius*, in his opinion a learned, eloquent and elaborate composition; that he would willingly call it a pious composition, could anything be pious which was opposed to the decisions of the church, from which no one could dissent without danger."* The true commentary on this artful evasion is furnished by Erasmus himself, in a letter written, about the middle of October, 1525, to Michael Buda, Bishop of Lingen: "A new dogma has arisen, that there is nothing in the Eucharist except bread and wine. To confute this is now a very difficult matter; for John *Æcolampadius* has fortified it by so many evidences and arguments, that the very elect might almost be seduced by them." He expressed the same judgment to Peter Barbirius, in almost the same words.†

On the publication of this treatise, *Æcolampadius* wrote to Melancthon and Conrad Pellican, to explain to them, especially to the latter, by what process he had been gradually led to forsake the established doctrine,

* "*Magnifici Domini; celsitudinis vestræ hortatu perlegi librum J. Æcolampadii de Verbis Cœnæ Domini—mea sententia doctum, disertum, elaboratum, adderem etiam pium, si quid pium esse posset, quod pugnat eum sententia consensuque Ecclesiæ—a qua dissentire periculosum esse judico.*"—Apud Melchior Adam. *Vita Æcolampadii*.

† *Scultetus Ann.* 1525, p. 249. *Gerdes. Hist. Evang. Renov.*, tom. ii. § 105. *Hospin. Pars.* ii. p. 57. There was a general impression at the time that Erasmus (and even Luther himself, before his dispute with Carlostadt) believed no more than the spiritual presence. Conrad Pellican, who was in the confidence of Erasmus, declared that such was the real and secret opinion of the latter; but it was warmly disclaimed by him. See *Scultet. ann.* 1526, p. 57.

what reflections had awakened him, what scruples had restrained, what difficulties had perplexed him; so long as he was guided by any human authority; and how at length he broke his fetters and shook off the prejudices which obscured his intellect. At the same time he sent copies of his book to his evangelical brethren in Swabia; and while he deprecated any offence on their parts on account of his honest investigation of the truth, and entreated them so to judge his work as never to lose sight of charity, he displayed the peacefulness of his own spirit in the following reflection—"Error is pardonable, so long as there is faith in Christ; but discord, though we should pour out our blood to atone for it, can never be expiated."

The divines of Swabia did not profit by this overture of amity. They immediately replied to his manifesto (on the 12th of November) in a tone and feeling very different from his own. Fourteen theologians subscribed their names to the composition, which was called in consequence the "Syngramma;" but it was generally ascribed to Brentius, minister of Halle in Swabia, an early and zealous disciple and correspondent of Luther, a young man of education and some learning. At the head and in the name of this confederacy he warmly maintained the doctrine of consubstantiation, asserting that the body of Christ was united to the bread by the same sort of operation, by which a healing efficacy was communicated to the serpent of brass on the utterance of the words of God—"Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live." To this treatise, wherein the literal sense was defended, as usual, against the metaphorical, Œcolampadius, before the end of the year, opposed his Antisyngamma; in which he endeavoured to show that the arguments of his antagonists, properly

considered, only demonstrated the conclusions advanced by himself.

It had been well had the controversy rested there. But Zwingli was too deeply offended by the insults, offered by the Swabians to his brother Reformer, to remain a mere spectator of the contest. "I have seen nothing in this age," thus he wrote to Theobald Billican,* "less praiseworthy than this Syngramma, on account both of the violence almost invariably offered in it to Holy Writ, and of its immoderate pride and insolence. Œcolampadius, of all men the most harmless, a very model of every sort of piety and learning, he, from whom most of them have learnt what they know of literature,† is so infamously treated by them, with such filial ingratitude, that we are called upon, not for reproaches, but for execrations. . . ." These fierce expressions, being immediately circulated among the Lutheran party, did not tend to smooth the course of the controversy.

Luther regarded the Syngramma with a very different eye. It contained his own opinion, and defended it by his own arguments; and to him it was not the less acceptable for its very severity and rudeness. Accordingly he undertook its patronage. He caused it to be translated into German by Pomeranus, and gave weight to the translation by a preface, composed in no conciliatory spirit. He designated the opposite opinions as novel

* Ad Theobaldi Billicani Epistolam Responsio, Calend. Martii, 1526. In speaking of the insolence of the Lutheran doctors he expressed his apprehension, lest a body of Γράμματορῦπαννοι should rise up in the church, in the place of the old episcopal tyrants. They had threatened him with Melancthon: Nos de Melancthone nihil sinistrum suspicamur, neque ad pugnam lacessimus; but with truth on our side we shall finally succeed. This tract is written in a tone of confident moderation.

† Brentz had been the pupil of Œcolampadius.

dreams, and ridiculed the variations to which the rejection of the literal interpretation had already given rise. Some ground for this imputation did indeed exist,* but it was not for Luther to urge it; for if the appearance of certain shades of difference among the Sacramentaries was any argument that they were all in error, then did this very controversy between himself and them furnish very strong presumption, that both were wrong in the leading principles of the Reformation and that the truth remained with the church, from which both had seceded; but it was a plausible and popular argument, and it answered the purpose of the moment. He did not pursue it to its consequences; he did not pause so much as to reflect, to what good account it might afterwards be turned, as turned indeed it was, by the common enemy.

In July, 1527, Zwingli replied to a book of Luther's, and sent his treatise to the Elector of Saxony. In the opening passages he apostrophised his antagonist as follows: "You will not yourself deny that you are wild and raging under the influence of anger, if you will only read well the book which you have yourself written; for such a mass of personalities and perverse opinions cannot possibly proceed from the fountain of charity, or from careful and considerate premeditation. Only read through the compositions of all those who have ever poured forth the bitterness of their souls, and see if there be any one who has insulted all the bounds of reason so licentiously as you have done in this work, in which,

* For instance, both Zwingli and Œcolampadius maintained a metaphorical sense, but Zwingli placed the figure in the word *is*—this is my body—this *signifies* my body—while Œcolampadius placed it in the word *body*, according to a common metonymy which transfers the name of the thing signified to the sign which represents it. But how did this difference affect the main argument between them and Luther? The others were even less important.

indeed, you seem to have fallen beside yourself. Are we then to call this impotence of mind a spirit? Are we to be withheld by any awe from contradicting you in this matter?"

This was one only among many writings produced by Zwingle about the same time, on the subject of this controversy. In the year 1526 he published his answer to the letters of Billican and Urban Rhegius; an exposition of the words of the Lord's Supper, in German—the first occasion on which he descended from the language of the learned to that of the vulgar; an exhortation to the inhabitants of Nuremberg; an answer to a private communication from a distinguished friend; and an elaborate epistle, also in German, to the inhabitants of Eslingen. In 1527 he published the above-mentioned reply to Luther's treatise on the Eucharist, and another to a book of James Struthio on the same subject; also, in February, his "Friendly Exegesis, or Exposition" of the controversy, likewise addressed to Luther; and an "Apology," in answer to a sermon preached by the same against the "fanatics." In the Exegesis he replied at once to six publications of Luther, in which he declared himself to have been censured, before he had so much as mentioned the name of his opponent in any composition of his own.

At the same time Œcolampadius, though somewhat less active in this controversy, maintained by occasional treatises both his doctrine and his reputation. In 1526 he published, together with his letter to Billican and his Antisyngramma, two sermons concerning the dignity of the Eucharist. They were written with his accustomed moderation; and their object was rather to explain his opinion, and to remove various false impressions which had been spread abroad regarding it, than to assail either the tenets or the persons of its adversaries.

That he had robbed the Sacrament of all its honour; that he had torn away Christ the bridegroom from His spouse the church; that the Swiss Reformers acknowledged nothing in the Eucharist, except the mere bread and wine; that they had less of true religion and divine worship in their churches, than was to be found among the very Jews—such were the calumnies which that sincere and charitable Christian found it necessary to repel. There was only one among them, which would seem to us deserving of any notice. Respecting the nature of the consecrated elements, Œcolampadius replied to the detractors: That that could not properly be called mere bread and wine which was solemnly recommended by Christ, which was the most sacred sign of His most holy body, which was the means of preserving the memory of His passion, which was a league of charity amongst the faithful. In the year following he once more defended his principles in a tract intitled “A second just and fair Reply to Martin Luther.”

Meanwhile Luther contended with a vehemence, which seemed to increase with the perseverance of the opposition. In 1526, besides a letter to the inhabitants of Reutlingen, in which he spared neither of his opponents, besides his preface to the translation of the *Syngramma*, and various exhortations to individual ministers to be constant in the truth, he published a celebrated sermon on the same subject. Herein, with a perfect confidence in the certainty of his opinion, as based on the literal interpretation, he cast the stigma of heresy upon those who did not adopt it, and removed them from his communion. He reasoned against the two assertions of his opponents—that the supposition of the oral manducation was absurd; that it was unnecessary. He maintained that the ubiquity of Christ's body was not a more irrational notion, than the diffusion of the

soul through every part of the body, or the production of many grains of wheat from one grain, or the simultaneous comprehension of many objects by the eye, or the extensive and penetrating efficacy of the corporeal voice of man.

“Further, when the Gospel is preached through the exertion of the human voice, does not every true believer, by the instrumentality of the Word, become actually possessed of Christ in his heart? Not that Christ sits in the heart as a man sits upon a chair, but rather as He sits at the right hand of the Father. How this is, no man can tell, yet the Christian knows by experience that Christ is present in his heart. Again: every individual heart possesses the whole of Christ, and yet a thousand hearts in the aggregate possess no more than one Christ. The Sacrament is not a greater miracle than this.”

Respecting the second objection—that the supposition of the bodily presence was useless—he argued that that was not the question, but its scriptural truth; and that many other facts were believed by us on that authority, which, so far as we can comprehend, were unnecessary for the work of redemption. “The great use of the Sacrament is, that the faithful communicant may not only believe, that the body and blood of Christ are there present, but also that Christ himself is thereby given to him as a free gift. He is therefore to preserve a lively attention to the injunction, ‘Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you;’ for these are the very words which give strength to his faith. There are two positions in the Sacrament, both of which are the objects of the true Christian’s belief. The first is the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, and this the papists profess that they believe; the second is, that the body and blood of Christ are freely bestowed upon us, without any merits of our own, and this the papists do not be-

lieve. Now, our adversaries, the Sacramentaries, place all the virtue of the Eucharist in a mere commemoration of the death of Christ; they contend that the bread and wine are no more than symbols whereby we make it plain to others that we are Christians: whereas our doctrine is, that in receiving the bread and wine our Lord freely bestows on us his body and blood, and that we appropriate these to ourselves, and become actually possessed of them for the remission of our sins. Thus Christ becomes ours.”*

The reader will discover, even in these short specimens of Luther's Sacramentarian publications, that peculiar mixture of striking defects with some excellence—of false though lively illustration, assumption of the question, misrepresentation of the opposite opinion, bigotted confidence in his own, interspersed with some just and Christian observations—which characterise, in greater or less proportions, the many injudicious compositions, with which he prolonged and irritated this unfortunate controversy.

In the year 1527 he published an elaborate treatise, asserting the unshaken efficacy of the words of Christ, “Against the fanatical Spirits of the Sacramentaries.” Herein, assuming as he was wont, the whole point in dispute, that is, the truth of the literal interpretation, and inferring the ubiquity of the body of Christ from the text—“No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven”†—he advanced, according to Scultetus, the following singular propositions: “That the body of Christ is not of necessity in the bread, as wine is contained in a barrel; but rather as objects are in a mirror, or trees in seeds, or as Levi was in the loins of Abraham; that the nature of the flesh of Christ is

* Milner cites this passage. De Eucharistia, vii. 335.

† St. John iii. 13.

illustrated by the text : that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit : as it was not begotten by flesh, but by the Holy Ghost ; that our bodies have a physical perception of the body of Christ in the Eucharist ; that the words of St. Paul*—‘ That rock was Christ ’—are not to be understood of a visible and bodily rock, but of Christ himself ; that the fruit of the corporal manducation is this—the mouth, palate and body which eat the body of Christ obtain thereby everlasting life.” Both Zwingle and Œcolampadius replied to these theses ; the latter in his “ Just and fair Reply ;” the other in that tract, of which the opening passage has already been cited.

Besides the works already mentioned, Luther had published a letter to one Hervagius, and a treatise “ On the Adoration of the Sacrament,” inscribed to the Bohemians ; and these were comprehended by Zwingle among the six offensive compositions, to which he replied in his “ Friendly Exposition.”

In 1528 Luther, still unwearied and undaunted, renewed the assault with redoubled violence in his “ Great Confession concerning the Lord’s Supper.” This work was divided into three parts. In the first he attacked Zwingle ; in the second Œcolampadius ; in the third he declared his own confession of faith, which he put forth as the sure considerate conviction of his mind, to be held fast by him through life and after death. In this composition, as if desirous to shift the contest from its plain intelligible ground and to remove it to a more perplexed and intricate field, he entered deeply into the metaphysical controversy concerning the person of Christ. He did not blush, since it served his present purpose, to invest himself with all that scholastic jargon and sophistry, which he had so often and so eloquently denounced, and

* 1 Cor. x. 4.

to descend into the darkest depths of minute and elaborate, rather than ingenious, absurdity.

“The body of Christ (this he advanced among other similar positions) has an incomprehensible and spiritual mode, by which it occupies no space, but penetrates through all created things whithersoever it will—as the sight penetrates through air, light and water, and occupies no place; or as sound pervades air, water, or walls, and yet fills no space; or as light and heat penetrate the same and similar substances, yet occupy no space. This mode He used, when He went out of the closed Sepulchre; when He entered, the doors being shut; such is He in the Eucharistical bread and wine, and such we believe He was, when he was born of His Virgin Mother.” He asserted besides, that the body of Christ had a *definitive* mode of existence, by which it was in the rock (*Christus petra est*) and penetrated the rock; and that the same would hereafter be common to all the Saints in Heaven, as it is now common to the angels and the devils. . . . Luther set great value upon this production, and the opinion was shared by his followers, insomuch, that when in after times the divines of his persuasion drew up the formulary of their faith, they received it as a work of irrefragable authority and enrolled it among their symbolical books.

The defenders of the opposite opinion immediately replied, as was now indeed no difficult task. For the controversy having once deserted its original ground and spread into the boundless field of speculation, of licentious speculation on things inscrutable, the facilities of dispute were multiplied without end, and fallacies innumerable were at hand on the fruitful suggestion of sophistry. As the contest proceeded, the points contested became more minute and insignificant; and from an argument on the principles of scriptural interpretation

and the application of them to an important text, it degenerated into a quarrel about mere words. And what was worse than this, though not less customary in the progress of theological dissention, the more abstruse, or vain, or fanciful the question disputed, the warmer the zeal of the disputants ; while every new turn in the combat only roused them to more obstinate exertion and a fiercer enmity.

While the theologians of Saxony and Switzerland were furnishing every year by their increasing intemperance fresh ground of lamentation to the friends of the Reformation, of joy and triumph to the common foe, a more moderate party was making some ineffectual attempts at reconciliation. These were the divines of Strasburg, of whom the chief was Bucer. This excellent and learned Christian, in all other points the adherent of Luther and attached to him by personal intimacy, differed from him on the subject of the Eucharist ; yet so as to deprecate any hostile discussion and to exhort both parties, by placing a candid construction on each other's opinion, to preserve the unity of the church. Offended by the publication of the Syngramma, he admonished Brentius how dangerous would be the effects of the contention which he and his Swabian brethren was raising ; and how inconsistent it was with justice and piety to assail the pure evangelical reputation of *Œcolampadius*.

A few months earlier, on Nov. 18, 1525, Capito, another eminent divine of Strasburg, thus expressed his doctrine in a letter to Osiander :* “ We maintain that

* Osiander was a native of Bavaria, born in 1498. Of a warm and zealous temperament, he became an early convert to the doctrines of Luther and a devoted adherent to his person. After concluding his theological studies at Wittenberg, he was appointed a preacher at Nuremberg in 1522 and remained there for many years. After his master's death

Christ, who is the way and the truth, is in the matter of the Eucharist. Some make of this an article of faith and say, the corporal body of Christ is truly in the bread and wine. Others deem it essential that the elements be regarded as mere bread. We do neither : because both the one and the other infect the purity of the faith, interrupt the concord of the churches, throw snares round the minds of the simple, and open the door to a new despotism. For the mysteries of Scripture are not to be rashly laid hold of and made necessary articles of faith."

The mission of Chazellius (the professor of Hebrew at Strasburg) to Luther, in the beginning of the same month, was intended, in the same spirit, to perpetuate a brotherly union between the Saxon and the Swiss Reformers; and to suggest that each party might retain its own opinion, veiling the unimportant difference by a discreet use of general terms. But the "Instruction to the Evangelists of Strasburg,"* which Luther returned to their messenger, was not favourable to the hope of concord. In this document, he threw all the blame of the aggression on Zwingle and Œcolampadius: "There is nothing that we desire more than peace. We were not the first to get up this tragedy. It is not endurable that we should be silent, and, while they are talking and disturbing our churches and lessening our authority, to submit to it. If they are anxious about the continuance and integrity of their own doctrinal authority, let them refrain from diminishing ours. Finally, the one or the other of us must be ministers of Satan; either they are so, or we.† Therefore there is no place here for temper-

he engaged so ardently in the disputes about the Interim as to be expelled from his church. He died at Koningsberg in 1552.

* Lett. Luth. Nov. 5, 1525: "Instructio M. M. L. data Georgio Chaselio ad Evangelistas Argentinenses." (No. 753.)

† "Summa—alterutros oportet esse Satanæ ministros, vel ipsos, vel

aments or a middle course. Each party must make profession of its belief. And we do at once entreat our opponents, since they are so certain of their opinion, not to dissemble our difference before the people. But if they shall persist in their dissimulation, it will be incumbent on us to make profession of the diversity and opposition of our spirits. For what compact can there be between Christ and Belial? We will readily accept the proffered peace, so long as we can preserve that peace with God which we have received through Christ. . . . I am grieved that Zwingli is offended at the certainty which I have expressed of the truth of my doctrine. It was indeed a very vain expression, if you regard the flesh; but a very wholesome one, if true; since Peter has taught us to say that we are certain we speak the word of God. Unless they were destitute of this certainty, they would not cast such reproaches on my certainty and confidence." From the tone of this production Bucer must have perceived, that there could be little prospect of any change or compromise in the conviction of Luther. And if his exertions were still continued, it was in the spirit of evangelical perseverance, and in the hope that, by keeping open the gates of conciliation, he might at length bring the less determined partisans to admit the manifest expediency of entering them.

Meanwhile the Strasburgers, though they would willingly have acted as mediators, did not refrain from taking their part in the controversy. In the year 1526 both Capito and Bucer tendered their assistance to the

nos; ideo hic nulli consilio aut medio locus; confiteri oportet alterutram partem quod credit. . . . Quod Zwinglius vel ipsi meo verbo offenduntur quod dixi: Es muss recht seyn, was ich schreib: doleo . . . quæ certitudine nisi ipsi inanes essent, meam certitudinem et fiduciam non sic damarent. . . ."

Sacramentarian party. The latter especially, while he published a Latin translation of Luther's *Postilla*, and noted from time to time such opinions as he thought incorrect, prefixed a preface to his work, in which he proclaimed the belief of his own church respecting the great question in dispute: "Our belief is this—that according to the doctrine of St. Paul, as often as we eat the bread and drink the wine of the Sacrament, we show the Lord's death till he come; that is, we consider, confess and declare that Christ offered to his Father on the cross His body and blood for our redemption; and doing this with a true faith we know that our souls are really fed, nourished and strengthened by the flesh and the blood of Christ."* Two years afterwards he once more aided his Helvetian allies in their attack on Luther's "Great Confession," by the publication of a witty and elegant German treatise, in the form of a dialogue between two imaginary persons, Sebaldus and Arbegastus.


Such was the state of this controversy at the end of the year 1528. The attempts of the mediating party had altogether failed. The principal disputants, so far from convincing, or conceding, or approaching at all nearer in opinion, were only become more bigotted each to his own doctrine; so far from moderating the polemical spirit and language of the debate, they were only more passionate and personal in their invectives. Be-

* "Since both parties preach and acknowledge," thus Bucer wrote in another place, "that Christ our only saviour is with his servants in the supper; since they are even not unwilling to confess and call the bread of the supper his body; what such great risk is there to faith or piety, that we are to quarrel and fight so furiously about the *manner* in which the bread is the body? Since even those, who contend for the corporal presence of the Lord, do not by any means agree with each other, as their publications prove." Apud Scultet. ann. 1528.

sides, the dispute was rendered more obscure and complicated by the new question which had grown out of it. Pressed by the argument, that the body of Christ, which was at the right hand of the Father, could not at the same time be present in the Eucharist, Luther was driven to the absolute assertion of its ubiquity; and the admission followed, that, even before its ascension,* it was both in heaven and earth and pervaded every portion of space. This remarkable position was one of those paradoxes, which, if not at once consigned to ridicule and contempt as beneath the grave consideration of reason, gave birth to interminable wrangling. And since the Swiss divines undertook to confute it seriously, and as the age of scholasticism was not yet gone by, it was argued with a perversion of intellect, which sharpened, as it is wont to do, the bitterness of animosity. For our understandings and feelings are thus far in communication and sympathy; the latter are more apt to inflame, when the reason is occupied on any mean and unworthy subject; and the higher and the nobler the matter in controversy, the better chance there is of calm and amicable argument.

In this matter there can be no question that the greater share of blame rests with Luther and his party; for if the first attack upon the opinion of the consubstantialists proceeded from the Swiss, the first personal aggression was made by the others. Luther's followers took their tone from their master, and he transferred to the present controversy all that vehemence of unmeasured vituperation, which he had found so successful in his papal warfare. There was no discrimination in his vehemence.

* In his Book (published in 1527) "*Quod Verba Christi adhuc firmant contra, &c.*" Scultet. ann. 1527, p. 89.




The contest of the moment, whether with Zwingle or Erasmus, or Eck, roused all his energies and put the whole machinery of his soul in motion. And while thus altogether engrossed, whether by the supposed importance of the point in dispute, or by impatience of opposition, or by passion for victory, he made no distinction between his opponents, nor much regarded any one of their principles or opinions, except that against which he was contending. And this appears not even so much from his public treatises, fierce and slanderous as they often are, as from the examination of his private correspondence.

A few extracts will suffice to show the spirit, with which he was inwardly animated towards his fellow-reformers, during the earlier part of this controversy. On Jan. 20, 1526, he addressed Nicholas Hausman as follows: "I have written to Duke George with good hope; I have been deceived, and my humility has been thrown away. But I shall not answer. I am not moved by his falsehood and invective. Is it hard to bear with him, when I am compelled to bear with the children of my own womb—my Absaloms, who resist me with all their fury—I mean those Sacramentomagistæ, in comparison with whose madness the Papists themselves are mild opponents? Thus it is that Satan assails me through their means. But Christ lives. Theobald Billican, preacher of Nordlingen, is now writing against Zwingle, Carlostadt and Œcolampadius. God raises up his own remnant against these new heretics. . . . I would write against them myself if I had leisure."

On the 13th of the September following, after announcing the approaching end of the world, and the presence of the last day on the very threshold of the universe, he proceeded: "I am provoked by Œcolam-

padius. . . . I grieve from my heart that so great a man should be involved by frivolous and utterly worthless arguments in that sacrilegious sect. May the Lord have mercy on him!" Exactly a year afterwards he wrote to John Secerius, a printer at Basle: "This is what I have always said, that those heretics, the Sacramentaries, hold Christ in ridicule, and that they have never yet thought or taught anything seriously. No man of piety so seeks the glory of God as to be ignorant when Christ is blasphemed, or to think it a light matter." On Nov. 10, to Justus Jonas, while suffering under great bodily and mental affliction: "How I wish, again and again wish, that Erasmus and the Sacramentaries could for one quarter of an hour only experience the present misery of my heart; with what certainty could I pronounce that they would be converted, sincerely converted, and healed!" On the 7th of March, 1528, he wrote to one Gabriel Zwilling in no very charitable spirit: "The disputation at Berne is finished; nothing is done, but that the mass is abolished, and the boys in the streets sing that they have got rid of their baked god. That same Zwingle there has been escorted up and down by a thousand people, a glorious conqueror and lord, whose end will be perdition and confusion, and that soon too, so we pray only with diligence!" And a few days afterwards he complained to Wenceslaus Link of Zwingle's "asinine" ignorance of all, even natural, dialectics, and the consequent impossibility of confuting him. Lastly, on the 28th of July in the same year, he addressed to Nicolas Gerbellius a furious attack on the Sacramentaries, not even sparing the "iniquity" of Bucer, which he concluded as follows: "But let us have done with the vipers; and may Christ preserve you, whose fate it is to dwell among those wild beasts,



vipers, lionesses, leopards, in scarcely less peril than Daniel himself when he dwelt in the den of lions.”*

Lest these reproaches—which, unjust and calumnious as most of them are, are not without some little alloy of piety—should appear to have been wholly unprovoked, it is proper to show that Luther likewise complained of violence which had been offered by his opponents, and by which he excused his own.

In the May of 1527 he sent to Stiefel a copy of his book “Against the Fanatics” (*Libellus Antischwermerius*), with the following remarks: “By the grace of God, many are by this book confirmed in the sound faith. . . . I am now expecting the furious reply of our adversaries; . . for Zwingli has addressed to me a sort of ‘Exegesis,’ with a letter in his own hand, full of pride and temerity. There is no sort of wickedness or cruelty of which he does not condemn me, so that even the papists themselves, my enemies, do not so lacerate me as these our friends, who without us and before us were absolutely nothing, who dared not so much as open their lips, and now, inflated by the victory which we have gained, make their assault upon us. This it is to be

* Leo X., in the midst of his greedy court, was formerly the Daniel of Luther. Now the cardinals were forgotten, and their places in the den occupied by *Æcolampadius* and Zwingli. The letters from which the above quotations are made are respectively numbered 774, 819, 899, 914, 959, 1019, in De Witte’s edition.

The Sacramentaries of course claimed the advantage in the exercise of Christian forbearance. Capito thus wrote to the preacher of Hesse on October 4, 1526:—“We have the advantage not only in our cause, but also in piety and charity. Praise be to Christ and God, not to ourselves! The moderation of Zwingli and *Æcolampadius* is from their nature and of the spirit, and therefore it is perpetual. Luther’s ardour is that of the perishable flesh, with which he is not yet well acquainted.”—*Apud Scultet.*, Ann. 1526, p. 51.

grateful ! This it is to deserve well of men ! However, I do now at length understand how it is, that the world is fixed in malignity, and that Satan is the prince of the world. Hitherto I thought that these were mere words, but now I see that it is matter of fact, and that the devil does really reign upon earth."

CHAPTER XXXII.

SACRAMENTARIAN CONTROVERSY.—CONFERENCE OF
MARBURG.

Second diet of Spires—the Landgrave of Hesse summons a conference at Marburg—reply of Luther—confirmed by his private correspondence—the proposal of the Saxons that papists should be the arbiters—the shame of this rests in part with Luther—remarks—another proposal, that Zwingli should not be invited—apprehensions of Melancthon—zeal of Bucer—his address to Zwingli—meeting of the parties at Marburg—the previous and private discussions—public disputation—Luther suggests many other points of difference, which are removed—then comes the dispute on the bodily presence—Luther's declaration—assuming the whole question—in conclusion, both claim the victory—citations from the fathers—offers of fraternal amity made by the Swiss, and refused by the Lutherans—the formula of concord—possibly prepared by Bucer—the Swiss despise verbal cavils, and sign the Articles—including every point except the Eucharist—the sort of Christian charity acknowledged by the Lutherans—farther discussions broken off by a pestilence—the moderation of the Swiss misrepresented by Luther—his shouts of victory—Pallavicino—Melancthon's account—Luther's affirmation—firmness of the Swiss—evidence of Justus Jonas—Zwingli denies having made any concession—Bucer defends the moderation of his party—effect of the disputation on Catholics and Anabaptists—Zwingli's sarcasm on Luther—remarks—both parties claim the Landgrave of Hesse—Zwingli's sermon on providence—address to the Landgrave—policy of the latter—conversion of Lambert—Luther's letter to Probst—his principles at Marburg much the same as Campeggio's at Augsburg—his vanity—obscurity of his tenet—a middle tenet—he first appeals to the vulgar—loss of reputation and influence.

SUCH was the condition of this controversy—such the points in dispute, and the feelings of the disputants—when it first emerged into general notice, and came into contact with politics. This occurred, as we have already

observed, at the second Diet of Spires. The papal theologians, after watching with malicious satisfaction the growth of the intestine dissension, thought that the time was at length arrived to profit by it. Had the opinions of the Saxon divines alone been consulted, they might have done so; but the persuasions of human policy, coincident in this case with the dictates of Christian charity, overruled the blind intemperance of the synod of Wittemberg. Still only half the purpose was accomplished. The actual schism was for the time prevented, but the discord was not composed, nor was union, nor even the appearance of union, restored. During the negotiations, which occupied the spring and summer of 1529, the Landgrave's pacific exertions were perpetually thwarted, through the pertinacity of those theologians in rejecting their opponents from their communion, and through the influence which they possessed over the councils of the Elector.

The Landgrave then determined to bring about a conference between the chiefs of the parties. Whether it was, that he believed their difference to be altogether imaginary, or at the utmost verbal and unimportant; or that he entertained some doubts himself as to the truth of the Saxon doctrine; or that he expected, from personal intercourse between men of learning and piety—embarked in the same cause, impelled by the same principles and interests, and involved in the same dangers, whose points of variance were as nothing compared with the many and mighty subjects on which they agreed—if not a perfect harmony of opinion, at least a spirit of mutual concession and apparent reconciliation; or whether matters, in their present state, were hastening so manifestly towards a rupture, that he thought no mischief at least could follow from the attempt, he summoned the principal divines of Saxony, Switzerland, and

Strasburg, to meet together at Marburg in the autumn of 1529.

Zwingle had not much hope from the proposed deliberations, but he accepted without difficulty the overture of the Landgrave. Bucer was much more sanguine. But Luther, from the beginning, proclaimed his strong reluctance; yet he too at length yielded, and expressed his assent in the following terms:—

“ I have received your commands to go to Marburg to a disputation with Œcolampadius and his party about the Sacramentarian difference, for the purpose of peace and unity. Though I have very faint expectation of such unity, yet as I cannot too highly commend your zeal and care thereon, so will I not refuse to undertake a hopeless, and to us perhaps a dangerous office; for I will leave no foundation for our adversaries to say that they were better inclined to concord than myself. . . . I know very well that I shall make no unworthy concession to them. I cannot—while I am so perfectly assured that they are in error, since they are themselves uncertain of their own meaning. I have sufficiently explored all their ground in this matter, and they have very well ascertained my ground. Therefore it is my humble prayer that your highness will well consider whether this conference is likely to produce more fruit or hurt; since it is certain that, unless they yield, we shall separate without profit, and shall have met in vain.”

The same opinions were commonly expressed in his private correspondence: “The Landgrave has summoned us to Marburg, on Michaelmas day, with the design of establishing concord between us and the Sacramentaries. Philip and I, after many refusals, have been at length compelled, by his importunity (improbity), to promise to appear there; but I know not yet whether it will come to anything. We have no hope of advantage, but

suspect treachery from every quarter. The object is, that they may go away and claim the victory: just as in the age of Arianism, such synods invariably did more harm than good, allowing the Arians to boast, and disseminate their opinions. . . . But that youth of Hesse is restless and boiling with projects.”*

Thus Luther wrote to Brisman on the 2nd of August. On the 29th of the same month he addressed much the same expressions to Brentz, but with this important addition: That the promise of attendance on the part of Melancthon and himself was only made on the condition that “some *honest papists* should be present at the conference, as witnesses against those future Thrasons and vain-glorious saints.”† This disclosure exhibits the Saxon divines in a new character—not only as receding from the principles of the Reformation and shrinking from the consummation of their own work, but even as falling back upon their old enemies and seeking refuge among them. But indeed, during the last three years, they had written so much and so violently against the Swiss, so little against the papists, as to give a pretext for the assertion of Erasmus, that the work of the insurgents was already broken in pieces, and that the Lutherans were eagerly returning to the bosom of the church.

Of the above proposal, historians commonly ascribe the shame to Melancthon, because, as we shall presently

* No. 1138. In the following letter to Brentius (No. 1149), he calls the Landgrave, “*Juvenis iste Macedo Hassiacus* ;” and in the familiar correspondence of the Saxon reformers of those days, we find Philip of Hesse very commonly designated merely *Macedo*.

† “*Nos promissimus adesse, si alios quoque atque adeo honestos papistas advocaret, ceu testes contra futuros istos Thrasones et gloriosos sanctos.*” In the same letter he advised Brentz, though summoned, not to attend.

see, he was made the instrument of urging it most strongly upon the princes; but the cited words of Luther may convince us that he had his full share in it, and, if we may judge from the bitterness of his expressions, no reluctant share. The probability rather is, that the project was his own, though he committed to his obsequious friend the office of propounding it. Howbeit, Philip of Hesse was much too honest an antipapist to give it any countenance: the Swiss, under any circumstances, could not possibly have submitted to it. It fell to the ground accordingly, leaving to its Saxon patrons the everlasting disgrace of having suggested it, without the advantage which they might have gained by its adoption. It was not yet endurable, that the Reformers should consent to refer their intestine disputes to a Roman Catholic tribunal; that they should call in their unrelenting foe, not only as the exulting witness of their broils, but as the very prop and arbiter of their doctrines. Had this proposal proceeded from any Thersites in the camp, it had still been base and discreditable. That it was authorised, if not suggested, by the father of the Reformation, the denouncer of Antichrist, the composer of the "Babylonish Captivity," argues an instability which, in an ordinary mind, would have been merely contemptible; but which, when found in a vigorous, daring, and even noble character, makes us pause awhile to mourn, in self-distrust and humility, over the incalculable inconsistency of our common nature. The failings of every-day characters belong only to themselves, but the delinquencies of the great are a loss to all mankind. They rob us of our self-respect and confidence, they chill our higher and more generous aspirations, and make us despair of the capabilities of our species.

This counsel was pressed upon the young Prince

Frederic John as early as May 14, in a letter generally ascribed to Melancthon,* and written after deliberate consultation with Luther. The pretexts advanced for it were these: That otherwise the Catholics would regard the conference as a conspiracy; and the Zwinglians, in the absence of any neutral party, would surely claim the victory. Now, as to the first of these, it should have been very indifferent to a sincere anti-Romanist what opinion the enemy might form of his deliberations; since he might be well assured, that every combination, in furtherance of the interests of his cause and in opposition to ecclesiastical despotism, would be denounced as a conspiracy; and the better it might be calculated to gain those ends, the more fiercely denounced. As to the second: the Catholics, as Luther well knew, were not neutral in that quarrel. Their opinion was separated from his by a mere shadow of greater or lesser mystery, the real bodily presence and oral manducation being equally admitted by both; while that of the Zwinglians was in manifest opposition to both—so that the papal arbiters could not avoid deciding in his favour. Besides, his oft-repeated apprehension of the future boasts and arrogated triumphs of his opponents betrays a weakness, not perhaps amounting to distrust in his cause or in himself, yet ill according with that certain assurance of the truth of his doctrine, which he was so fond of vaunting and which amounted, as he declared, to actual knowledge.†

* The style of this letter would rather prove it to be Luther's; and Müller, without hesitation, pronounces him the author of it: so does Gerdesius, *Hist. Evang. Renov.*, Ann. 1529, § 84. Scultetus attributes it to Melancthon.

† "Ich berrhe darauff, dass ichs mit den Strassburgen nicht halten will mein lebenlang; und *weiss* dass Zwingel und seine gesellen unrecht vom Sacrament schreiben." Thus he wrote in a letter to the Elector.—*Apud Gerdes.*, Ann. 1529, § 84.

Should we suppose, as some imagine, that the proposal of a condition, which could not possibly be accepted, was a mere artifice to stifle the conference, still it was a disreputable device, and for a purpose unworthy of its authors;* for free discussion was the very life and essence of the Reformation: it was the element in which it first breathed, and in which alone it could hope for maturity. It afforded too the only means of eliciting and testing that truth which was so continually on the lips of the Reformers, and was their only professed pursuit. In whatsoever light we may regard that proceeding of the two Saxon chiefs, and with whatsoever disposition to excuse it, still it is impossible, without degrading the character of history, to compromise the just expressions of our reprobation.

Another proposition, in a similar spirit, was suggested in the same letter—that among the divines to be summoned from Switzerland to the controversy, Zwingli should not be one. This was of course equally inadmissible; and it is only worth recording, as it proves the fear which he had inspired into his antagonists by his controversial powers, his boldness and his constancy. But it appears too, that Melancthon was terrified, not only by the force of his arguments, but by the plausibility of his doctrine; insomuch, that he was suspicious of any familiar intercourse between Philip and the Sacra-

* Another little plot with this object is imputed to them, seemingly with truth. As it was not thought expedient that the Landgrave should be made acquainted with Luther's dread of the conference, lest it should confirm his inclination towards Zwingli, he wrote, though with a very bad grace, to express his consent. But at the same time Melancthon wrote to exhort Prince John Frederick, that he would influence the Elector to refuse permission to himself to attend the conference; and this, it was thought, would have justified Luther in withdrawing his promise; but this scheme too fell to the ground.—See Beausobre, *Hist. Reform.*, lib. vii. p. 114.

mentarian doctors. "It is not desirable that the Landgrave should have much communication with the Zwinglians, lest he should take to them too much. For their argument is of such a nature, that men of a certain acuteness, such as he unquestionably is, are the first to be caught by it; for theirs being an intelligible opinion, reason is easily brought to favour it, especially if men of learning subscribe to it, and give it a colour by scriptural testimonies,—as indeed we do now perceive many of eminent erudition ranging themselves on the side of Zwingle." This was perfectly true. Four years of active controversy had transferred many intelligent disciples from the camp of Luther to that of Zwingle. The most numerous converts were to be found in the imperial cities; most of which, while they were also inclined to bolder measures of reform in ceremonies and observances than Luther would sanction, adopted the more antipapistical doctrine on the Eucharist. But with all this before his eyes, was it not strange that a man of learning and piety and caution bordering on timidity, who admitted how attractive to reason was the opinion he opposed, should yet persist in opposing it, year after year, with such heedless and merciless obstinacy, as to disclaim the brotherhood of its supporters, also learned, pious and powerful, to consent to their proscription, and to consign them without remorse, as Luther advised at Spires and as Melancthon acted at Augsburg, to the fury of the common destroyer?

The same diligence, which Luther had employed to prevent this conference, had been exerted by Bucer to give effect to it. Scandalised by dissensions, which were continually objected to him by the papists as a conclusive argument against the general cause, he snatched at any expedient which gave a hope of composing them. In his assumed character of mediator, he addressed his ex-

hortations to both parties. He drew up a confession of faith in terms so guarded, and veiled the point of difference with such nice ambiguity, as to leave, in his opinion, no space or pretext for further disunion; adopting in this matter the expressions of the fathers, as those best calculated at once to reconcile the disputants, and to recommend their doctrine to universal respect. Then, fearing lest the Disputation should descend through Luther's intemperance to a mere theological broil, he urged on Zwingle the necessity of fraternal forbearance.

"Luther, most respectable Zwingle, is all fury. Do you, I beseech you, be all mildness, and manage him as you would a deranged brother, leading him to truth by fair language. This demeanour is demanded of you, both by the cause which you support, and by the favourable decision which you may thus obtain for it. There are princes and others of piety and consideration who are desirous of this conference. The project would altogether fail if we too were opposed to it." Such warnings were not impertinent to either party, and to Zwingle there was some hope that they might not be addressed in vain; for though his mind was bold and independent, his temper was not violent, and his principles in regard to such differences removed him far from bigotry. It was thus, for instance, that he wrote to a friend at Constance on this same subject: "Let us do the work of God strenuously, and we shall find that friendship may be exercised and confirmed thereby. . . . If there be any difference between us, let us contend with courteousness and within the bounds of friendship; not after the fashion of Wittemberg (Wittembergice), where all is vapour, and menace and tyranny; but with good nature and such simple weapons of innocence as children use."

The senate of Zurich made great difficulties in permitting his departure from the city: but when they at

last consented, he set out on the 5th of September, and was joined on his journey by Œcolampadius from Basle, and Bucer, Hedio, and Sturm,* from Strasburg. The Saxon divines arrived at Marburg soon after them. All were courteously received by the Landgrave, and entertained in the castle at his own table. Œcolampadius and Bucer visited Luther on the afternoon of his arrival. The former was welcomed with friendly and becoming conversation—the latter with a goodnatured rebuke,† probably as being the principal mover of this unpromising and much deprecated assembly.

The Landgrave, to whom belonged the entire direction of the Disputation, not ignorant how many bitter taunts had already been interchanged between the chiefs of the parties, resolved to commit them, in the first instance, in a private interview, so that any misunderstandings might be corrected, and any calumnies wiped away, and a more friendly feeling created, before they should proceed to the ordeal of a public exhibition. He determined, besides, and with the same discretion, not yet to confront Luther and Zwingli. Accordingly, he directed Luther to confer with Œcolampadius, and Melancthon with Zwingli, for the common purpose of removing all obstacles to reconciliation by a dispassionate comparison of their doctrines and discussion of their differences. They met on Friday, October 1, and continued in deliberation, the former for three hours, the latter for twice that time.

It was supposed by the Swiss that the argument would

* James Sturm, a citizen of Strasburg, became, through his high reputation for truth and integrity, as well as talents, a frequent and influential actor in the negotiations of that time. He was intimately connected with the historian Sleidan, to whom he furnished many valuable materials, and whose work he revised shortly before his death.

† “Cum Œcolampadio quidem Lutherus in atrio arcis perquam amice et modeste collocutus est. A Bucero autem salutatus, subridens aliquantulum respondit: Tu es nequam et nebulo.”—Sculd. Ann. 1529.

be confined to the single question—the manner of the real presence in the Eucharist. But the Saxon divines, believing, or pretending to believe, that their adversaries held many other erroneous opinions, very widely enlarged the field of debate. They strictly interrogated them on the divinity of Christ, on original sin, on baptism, and the character of the ministry, on which two latter points they affected to impute to them the heresies of the Anabaptists. These suspicions were immediately repelled. They then proceeded to the question of the Eucharist; but there was the real field of difference, and they separated without making any approach to an understanding. The public disputation was accordingly appointed for the day following.

It was held in an inner apartment of the castle, in the presence of the Landgrave and his principal ministers, political and religious; of the deputies from Saxony, Strasburg, Zurich, and Basle; and of a few learned foreigners, who had permission to attend, for none attended without permission, and several were consequently excluded. Luther and Melancthon were seated on one side, Zwingle and Œcolampadius on the opposite. The rest of the assembly collected round them, as spectators of the coming scene, and with an attentive expectation, due as well to the importance of the controversy as to the reputation of the four most eminent champions of the Reformation.

The conference was opened by the chancellor of Hesse, who explained its object, and exhorted the disputants to a Christian moderation. Then Luther, instead of proceeding at once to the real point of controversy, insisted on a previous understanding on numerous other articles, respecting which he still professed to doubt the orthodoxy of the Swiss. And in addition to those above mentioned, as having been treated in the private discussions, he pro-

posed justification by faith, the power of the keys, confession and absolution, purgatory, and others. His object in persisting in this scrutiny may have been a latent wish to contend on any other ground than that prescribed to him, and even some vain hope that the disputation might exhaust itself on those preliminaries. It may have been, that he sincerely deemed the strictest unanimity on every point of doctrine to be absolutely essential to a brotherly union among Christians; or it may have been, that, if the Swiss should profess their agreement with him on the various matters thus propounded, he might proclaim it as a triumph, and take credit for his own Christian zeal at the expense of their inconstancy. The result would seem rather to indicate this last as his motive; but however that may be, the Swiss at once replied, that there was no difference on any one of those points, of which assertion the works of Zwingle bore sufficient evidence, and that the proper subject of their present discussion was the corporal presence.

The Landgrave immediately assented to this, so that Luther was compelled to yield; and this he did with so bad a grace as actually to declare, before the deliberation was so much as opened, before a single argument had been advanced on either side, that no consideration should ever induce him to depart from the literal meaning of the disputed text, and that he would listen neither to sense nor to reason, with the "Words of God" before him. This was at once to assume the entire question in dispute, to assume his own interpretation of those words, to sacrifice his own understanding to it, and to demand the same devotion from his opponents.* And this he

* Yet in a letter to Link, written March 28, 1528, Luther had ventured to impute to Zwingle, as has been already mentioned, an asinine ignorance of the principles even of natural dialectics. "I shall write no

called a more perfect belief in Holy Writ. Now, doubtless, where the meaning of Scripture is indisputable, it only remains for us to believe; but in this case there was field enough for controversy, and the proper understanding of those "four words" was as fair a subject for argument, as that of any other words in the whole Bible. So that any claim that Luther made to a higher measure of faith, through his adherence to his own interpretation, was only a veil to cover his own perversity—whether from his own eyes I know not—certainly not from those of his opponents, who saw clearly through it—but from those of wavering spectators and bigotted disciples.

This declaration of Luther, coupled with his notorious inflexibility, must have crushed in the very bud every hope of a satisfactory termination to the meeting. Nevertheless, the Swiss did not decline the argument, because they had never, probably, counted on his conversion; though they may have hoped to win the Landgrave and his court, or any impartial hearers, not perhaps to a public profession of their doctrine, but to a friendly disposition towards their persons and interests, and a general resolution not to sacrifice them through the accident of a single difference, on a question so very far from clear. It was under such circumstances that this celebrated debate commenced.

From the various and imperfect, and not altogether consistent, accounts* which remain of the particulars of

more against those vaniloquous men, because I perceive in them so absolute an ignorance of logic, as to make it impossible, even though theirs were a simple error, to instruct or compel them to the goal of confutation. For one can neither teach nor dispute without dialectics, at least natural dialectics; and Zwingli knows no more about them than an ass."

* The principal are Two Relations of Melancthon, addressed, the longer to Henry Duke of Saxony, the other to the Elector; one of Luther; a letter of the latter to Justus Jonas; and that which Bucer published in the following year in the Preface to his "*Explicationes Evangelicæ*."

the Disputation, it would not be easy, even were it desirable, to trace it with great perspicuity. In the conduct of theological controversy so much depends on explanation and illustration; arguments which are so plausible, when enforced by certain illustrations, often appear so feeble and inconclusive without them, that it is quite impossible to do justice to any long process of reasoning upon such matters by any abridgment, however faithful. I shall therefore refrain from any such attempt, only observing that in the defence of his cause Luther took, as he had declared, his immovable stand upon the words *this is my body*, and threw the burden of the opposite proof upon his opponents. And as often as they removed him from this ground, and engaging him in a more general argument gained, as they often did, any partial advantage, so constantly did he retire to his original position and entrench himself behind the same four words.†

The contest lasted through Saturday, October 2, and

Scultetus has compiled an elaborate account, on the comparison of the MSS. of those of Luther and Melancthon, though he does not give them his perfect confidence: "Cum existimatum sit non solum Lutherum, sed etiam Melancthonem in Actorum Colloquii Marburgensis expositione humani quid passum esse, contuli bona fide MSS. istorum actorum, &c." —Ann. 1529.

* In the course of a sophistical argument, whether the body of Christ, which Luther admitted to be *in loco*, could be in many places at the same time, Zwingli, having entangled him by some subtlety, triumphantly exclaimed, "'En, captum te habeo, Luthere.' Ad quæ Lutherus: 'Sive sit in loco, sive non, Deo committo. Hoc mihi satis est, *hoc est corpus meum*.' 'Oh, oh,' regerit Zwinglius: 'Ipsissima est petitio principii et rixosa contentio, &c.' " At another time, when the Swiss were arguing from analogy that the *est* in that text meant *significat*, Luther declared with warmth: "It is not for me to examine whether *est* in those passages does or does not mean *significat*: I take my stand on the words *This is my body*, and I rest there. The devil shall not drag me out of that hold. If I allow myself so much as to inquire how that can be, I renounce faith."

the following day. Then Œcolampadius, perceiving how vain was every attempt to draw him from his hold—observing, too, that the feelings of both parties were growing gradually warmer, and not with charity, proposed to terminate the controversy. On this Luther, assuming the tone of conqueror, addressed to his antagonists a sort of insulting exhortation to concord—by which he meant the adoption of his doctrines, standing, as he asserted, on the manifest Word of God. But they protested before the whole audience, that he had not defended his opinion by the Word of God; that his error was clearly demonstrated; and that the truth of the question had been abundantly proved both by Holy Writ and by the testimonies of the most ancient fathers.

Two among those fathers, whom Œcolampadius especially alleged as the supporters of his opinion, were Fulgentius and Augustine. Luther reluctantly admitted this, at the same time declaring that all the rest were on his own side. On this, the other requested him to mention so much as one, and pledged himself to confute the assertion. Œcolampadius was more deeply versed in that lore than either Luther or Melancthon. His challenge was not accepted; and though Melancthon left in the possession of the Landgrave a copious collection of such extracts from those ancient writers as he judged most favourable to the Saxon doctrine, they were not presented at the conference, nor subjected to the formidable scrutiny of the Swiss divines.*

* The relations of Scultetus and Hospinian are at seeming variance in this particular with that of Melancthon, but not, as Beausobre has observed, really so. After mentioning the challenge of Œcolampadius, Melancthon says: "We opposed to these passages of Augustine and Fulgentius a multitude of other passages from the Fathers, which we showed to the Landgrave, and which prove that the true body and the true blood

As it was now clear that the debates of the theologians could not possibly end in unanimity, the Landgrave and the other mediators endeavoured at least to establish an understanding of mutual toleration and amity. The Swiss and Strasburgers assented to this proposal. It was in perfect accordance with their principles. "Whosoever (said Zwingli on a subsequent occasion) there is an agreement on the essentials of religion, any diversity of opinion as to the rest ought never to break the bond of peace and charity." That the same was the spirit of Bucer was proved, not only by the expressions of his lips, but by his unremitted exertions to accomplish that very purpose. Accordingly, the Zwinglian party entered at once into the wishes of the Landgrave. They advanced the offer of Christian brotherhood to the Lutherans; and in soliciting the same from them, they engaged to prove from Holy Writ, that the difference which separated them was not essential, nor sufficient to interrupt their communion.

The question, by the repeated arguments which had been employed on it, was, in fact, reduced to this: whether the body of Christ, existing without extension or distinct parts, were really present, or not, in the elements at the Lord's table. On every other particular of the Christian law the opponents were agreed. Respecting the nature of the old covenant and of the new, the necessity of faith, the means of everlasting salvation there was no point of discord, when the Swiss proposed

are present in the Lord's Supper." This is so expressed, as to leave it doubtful, whether those counter-passages were exhibited in the presence of the enemy, or not. According to the above-named historians, they were not. It is agreed that Melancthon took little part in the disputation, which was conducted entirely by Luther, and that one of his few interpositions was, for the purpose of accusing his opponents of advancing "impertinent and ridiculous" arguments.

to their fellow-reformers, not any compromise of the disputed doctrine, but only the mutual exercise of fraternal charity.

The Lutherans refused the offer. They refused it with harshness. "We spoke to them on this matter (so Melancthon wrote to the Elector) with some severity (*durius*) that it seemed strange to us, with what conscience they could hold us for brothers, whom they thought in error on a point of doctrine*—how they could endure, that in their assemblies our doctrine should be taught along with theirs—which must be permitted on both sides, unless we proceeded to mutual excommunication." . . . This conclusion was dictated by so narrow a spirit, as to be scarcely reconcileable with that bold and majestic intellectual operation, which gave birth to the Reformation. It appears scarcely possible that a mind so capacious and exalted, as was exhibited by Luther in some of his earliest acts, should have degenerated so soon into such undisguised bigotry. Are we to ascribe this to religious enthusiasm? Doubtless his feelings were extremely powerful; yet we generally observe, on all great occasions, that they were subject to his reason; and his reason, though it permitted him to utter occasional paradoxes and other hasty and indefensible propositions, was seldom deliberately wrong and seldom persisted in error. Yet in this instance he not only persevered in blind submission to what he chose to call faith, so far as almost to reject the application of reason to the question in dispute; but he carried his adherence to his own notion, and his hostility to the opposite, to the very borders of persecution. If it was really a religious feeling which led him

* Similarly in a postscript to Luther's letter to J. Agricola of Oct. 12. "Vide eorum *stultitiam* cum damnent nos, cupiant tamen a nobis fratres haberi. Nos nolumus iis in hac re assentire."

to this extremity, we can only sigh over the infirmity of a lofty mind; and it may have been even thus. But his conduct has been more commonly ascribed to the operation of more vulgar motives—a rival's jealousy of the talents and reputation of Zwingli, and a tyrant's wrath at any opposition to his own spiritual supremacy over those, whom he called his children, and whom he wished to rule as slaves.

However, though communion was not re-established between them; though they did not consent to that sort of amity which would have been the basis of active co-operation, yet they did not part on terms of open enmity. The Swiss persisted in their advances; Zwingli himself declared before the Landgrave, with tears in his eyes, that there were none with whom he would so willingly be united, as the divines of Wittenberg;* and Luther at

* Zwingli's words, as cited by Luther in a letter to James Probst or Prævest, preacher of Bremen, written June 1, 1530 (No. 1217), but not published till twenty years afterwards, were—"Es sind keine leute auf erden, mit denen ich lieber wolt eins seyn, denn mit den Wittenbergen." "Summo studio egerunt," continued Luther, "ut nobiscum viderentur concordēs, ita ut hanc vocem nunquam ex me possent ferre: *Vos habetis alium spiritum quum nos*. Ardebant toti quoties hoc audiebant. Tandem id concessimus, ut fratres quidem non essent, sed tamen charitate, quæ etiam hosti debetur, nostra non spoliarentur." The same is implied in a letter of October 4, to Nicolas Gerbelius (No. 1154)—"Nos sane cum nostra satis fortiter defenderimus, illi, multa de suis cedentes, uno isto articulo de Sacramento Altaris pertinaces, dimissi sunt in pace. Quod fecimus, ne nimis mungendo sanguinem eliceremus. Charitatem et pacem etiam hostibus debemus. Sane denunciatum est iis, nisi et hoc articulo resipiscant, charitate quidem nostra posse eos uti, sed in fratrum et Christi membrorum numero a nobis censi non posse. Utinam et ille reliquus scrupulus per Christum tandem tollatur." Again, in a letter to J. Agricola, of the 12th of October: "In fine rogarunt ut saltem fratres eos agnoscere vellemus; *idque Princeps valde urgebat*—sed non potuit iis concedi. Dedimus tamen manus pacis et charitatis, ut interim quiescant aspera scripta et verba, et quisque suam sententiam doceat absque invectiva, sed non absque defensione et confutatione."

last so far relented as to grant them, not that brotherhood, which in his mind could only co-exist with a doctrinal unanimity, but "that charity which was due even to an enemy." These were his own words, written a few months after this event; but the understanding, at which they at length arrived, was thus officially expressed at the conclusion of a formal act of the conference: "Each party shall declare a Christian affection towards the other, as far as the conscience of either shall permit." In the execution of this article, it was much to be feared, from the demonstrations of conscience hitherto made, that this exercise of Christian affection would not be quite reciprocal. At any rate the Landgrave was defeated in his principal object. He designed to lay the foundation of a political confederacy. He desired that the parties should conclude some sort of compact, such as would justify them in acting thenceforward in concert against the Roman church, and presenting, whatever secret jealousies might still remain, an organised array and unbroken front.

This project was indeed thwarted by the intractable conscience* of Luther. Yet as many questions had been discussed on which there was no difference, it was thought expedient to draw up a "Formula of Concord," so far as that concord went, and submit it to the ratification of both. In fact Bucer, on the conclusion of the debates, in a learned and pacific discourse, invited the attention of the assembly from the one matter of dissension to the many and essential subjects of agreement. It may have been Bucer, too, who prepared the articles of the formula. At least the Swiss divines had no share in their composition. The terms, in which some of them were expressed, appeared objectionable both to Œcolampadius and Zwingle; and though they were in part

* "Conscientiæ necessitate."

amended according to their suggestions, some matter for verbal cavil still remained, had they been disposed for such controversy. But in a subject, wherein the prosperity, perhaps the safety, of the great Evangelical commonwealth was concerned, they deemed it beneath their own characters, beneath the majesty of the sacred cause committed to them, to allow any hope of union to be closed, so far as they were concerned, by any insignificant difference. And in this spirit, rather than in perfect approbation of the creed presented to them, they subscribed to it, on the evening of October the third.

It consisted of fourteen articles. It treated of the doctrine of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ ; His Passover and merits ; of original sin, as redeemed only through faith in Christ ; of justification by faith ; of the nature of the sacrament of baptism as appointed by God for the effecting and sealing this faith ; of the utility of free confession ; of the legitimacy of civil government ; of the celibacy of the clergy, and other points. The fourteenth was expressed in the following terms : " We all believe and think, concerning the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it should be used in both kinds according to its institution ; that the mass is not a work, by which any one can obtain grace for any other, either dead or alive ; that the Sacrament of the altar is the Sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ ; and that the spiritual manducation of this body and blood is essentially necessary to every Christian. In the same manner we agree concerning the use of the Sacrament, that, like the word, it is given and ordained of God to excite weak consciences to faith and love through the Holy Spirit." Then followed the clause above cited.

The facility, with which the Zwinglians acceded to these articles, encouraged some of their opponents to ex-

pect from them the last concession ; and arrangements were made for still further discussion on the morrow, when a contagious malady, then little known in Germany and therefore the more terrible, the sweating sickness, suddenly visited the city and dispersed the assembly. It is not however probable that any advantage would have followed from prolonging the conference. It was by this time manifest that Luther was fixed in the resolution—the same with which the Pope met the Lutherans at Augsburg on the following year—to yield nothing. The only chance of further agreement was by absolute concession on the part of his opponents. And it was not probable, that a man so honest and so firm as Zwingli, after a debate satisfactory to himself and certainly favourable to his cause, should cast away his advantage, and abandon to the mere authority of an imperious rival the only question in dispute.

The moderation of the Swiss, and their sincere desire for peace, were not appreciated by their antagonists. The object of the Lutherans was rather a party triumph, than a general advantage to the cause. They rather considered how they should elevate themselves and their own peculiar doctrine, than how they should advance the general interests of the Gospel. This was shown in the previous apprehension, more than once expressed by Luther, lest the victory should be claimed by his opponents. He determined that the conference should be, not a peaceful investigation of truth, between friends and for a common purpose, but a stubborn combat, in which his own credit must at any rate be maintained. Accordingly, no sooner were the disputants separated, than loud and arrogant pœans were sung, not by the Helvetian disputants, but by himself.* The report im-

* Thus he wrote to J. Agricola on the 12th of October:—"Ultra modum omnes pacem humiliter rogarunt. Cuncta objecta confutavi. . . .

mediately flew through every part of Germany, disseminated by the letters of his disciples, that the Zwinglians had recanted all their errors, that on the Eucharist alone excepted; that they were prepared to retract even that, had they not been deterred by the fear of the vulgar; and that they had produced no argument against the tenet of Luther, except their own inability to believe it (*non possumus hoc credere*).

Melancthon, in an account of this affair which he wrote to the Elector, so far confirmed these statements as to assign as the only motive for the perseverance of his opponents, "That they had advanced too far to retract easily, but that there was yet reason to hope for their perfect submission, if the negociation should be undertaken by some sovereign authority, and conducted with address." Luther himself repeated this assertion, and did not fear to confirm it with an oath.* "If I am

In summa homines sunt inepti et imperiti ad disputandum. Tametsi sentiebant sua nihil concludere, nolebant tamen credere in hac una parte de præsencia corporis Christi—idque metu et pudore magis quam malitia. In cæteris omnibus cesserunt." Again, to W. Link, Oct. 28: "*Satis et plusquam satis se humiliarunt et fraternitatem nostram ambiunt. D. Nicolas Amsdorf mirum quam exultet et jactet verbum Dei, quod illi ambierunt fraternitatem nostram, nec obtinuerint. Scilicet quod illi, qui nos idololatrias, carnivoras, Thyestas, et impanati et esculenti Dei cultores, Capernaïtas condemnarint, nunc ultro talium fraternitatem ambiunt, nec tamen digni habentur ut obtineant.*"

* Towards the conclusion of his letter to Jacob Probst of Bremen, which contains the following passage:—"Cum victi essent in Coena Dominica, noluerunt revocare hunc articulum, etiamsi viderent se non subsistere. Metuebant enim plebem suam, ad quam non licuisset reverti." The following are some of the remarks made on this conference by the honest papist, Pallavicino:—"Benchè Zuinglio, cupido di quest' unione è men duro che l' altro, se lasciasse espugnare in assai articoli, ò a sentire come Lutero, ò a parlare come Lutero, non potè impetrare niuno dalla superbia dell' emulo. La principal dissenzione rimase. . . . Anzi renduti insolenti i Luterani dalla prieghevolezza usata da Zuinglio cantarono palme e trionphi del loro Capitano. Onde anche i Zuingliani

a preacher of Christ, ay, if there is such a thing as truth, this which I speak is true." He is guiltless of the perjury. Doubtless he believed, in the vanity of his heart, that his antagonists were thus humbled and prostrate before him; but this only proves the more the nature of his own spirit—that he mistook moderation for timidity, a Christian temper for abject weakness, a disposition to make some verbal concessions, in furtherance of a great cause, for indifference to a Scriptural verity.

For it could not be truly said, that in the whole course of the Eucharistical argument the slightest symptom of vacillation had been shown by the Swiss. So far from it, that their courage only rose as the contest advanced, and the severest blows that were dealt by Zwingle were the last; and if other evidence were necessary to prove their firmness, there is that of Justus Jonas, who was present, who was a most jealous Lutheran, and who expressly declared the contrary, in a passage of conclusive authority:—"At length, our enemies pugnaciously (*mordicus*) persisting in their error, and we defending with no less zeal the cause of truth, we separated; and I doubt whether any agreement on the Sacrament can now be made between us. To-day (the 4th of October) the Prince, by means of his councillors and learned men, is seeking expedients for some sort of coalition; but on the matter of the Sacrament no reconciliation will ever be patched up, no concord will ever be brought to pass."*

irritati vantavano lo stesso del loro maestro sopra Lutero. . . . La ragione vera per la quale in questo sol punto non trovarono temperamento di concordia fù, perche in esso la preterita lor controversia era da materia troppo intesa dal popolo; ne si potea velar con oscuri voci, come quella del peccato originale, e perche niuno de' Eresiarchi volle ceder al' altro, e perder l' estimazione coi suoi. . . ."—Libro vii.

* The letter was addressed to William Reiffenstein, councillor of Stolberg. Justus Jonas continues: "I shall now say a few words concerning

Zwingle indignantly denied that he had made any sort of retractation, and appealed to his published works, as containing the sense at least of all the doctrines to which he subscribed at Marburg. To some expressions he perhaps objected, and to others he attached a slightly different meaning from that affixed to them by the Lutherans; but the belief of both, on all those important questions which were the subject of the preliminary discussions, was substantially the same: and thus, when in the following year he sent his confession to the Diet of Augsburg, it was found in general agreement with that of the Protestants on all important questions, except that of the Eucharist.

Bucer, on his part, in a preface to his “*Enarrationes Evangelicæ*,” published a laboured apology for the moderation of his friends. He declared that the request of fraternal union was founded on community of opinion between the parties, since both were agreed that it was the spiritual manducation which saved the souls of the communicants, while the oral had rather the opposite tendency, unless accompanied by the spiritual: so that, the essential inquiry being that concerning the means of salvation, there was in this case no essential difference. And he added, with great good sense, that no union of Churches could ever be permanent, unless some latitude of conscience were left to individual members; only care

the disposition and talents of each of the chief disputants. Zwingle is somewhat rude and forward (*arrogantulus*) in his manners; Œcolampadius is remarkable for a mild and obliging disposition; Hedio is equally distinguished by humanity and liberality; but Bucer has the cunning of a fox, which he wishes to be mistaken for sagacity and prudence. *They are all men of unquestionable learning*, and in comparison with them the Catholics are not worthy to be accounted adversaries; but Zwingle’s erudition seems to have been acquired against the grain, and in spite of the muses.” Compare these candid admissions with the vulgar slanders of Luther.

should be taken, that the foundation be firmly fixed in the doctrine of justification by faith, and a lively love towards one's neighbour. He then proceeded to show that the boasted concessions were not in fact any concession, and that the Act of Concord was signed after a private verbal explanation of the meaning of some particular passages. In like manner, Œcolampadius, in a letter to Berthold Haller (January 18, 1530), entered into discussion of the various articles, and justified his departure from the strict letter of his doctrine as no more than the sacrifice of expression for the sake of a substantial good, while he condemned the spirit in which Luther, by his unexpected inquisition into subjects unconnected with the object of the conference, had multiplied, as it were purposely, the aliments of discord.

If the Saxon divines had thus in some measure overreached their antagonists, and even confirmed, by their triumphant clamours, some wavering friends, the publication of the Articles of Concord produced more lasting advantage to the other party. The Sacramentaries had been so studiously confounded, by Luther and his followers, with the Anabaptists and other seditious fanatics, that many really believed them to hold extravagant and even dangerous opinions. Those prejudices were now removed; and it was discovered, both by Anabaptists and Catholics,* that they bore a much closer resemblance to their Lutheran calumniators than the last were willing to allow, or the Papists to believe; for to these no spectacle was so grateful as the intestine quarrels of the insurgents, and the more ample the matter for such broils, the greater their exultation. Yet, in religious matters, a single point of difference is often as effectual as many

* Œcolampadius, in the above letter, says: "*Nihil inexpectatum nuncias, narrans quod cum Papista cum Catabaptista ex colloquio nostro offenduntur—immo gloriantur nos victos.*"

in causing and perpetuating dissension; and the animosities of those, who are separated by a mere line, may be as fierce and lasting as the feuds which are fed from a thousand sources.

Though the Lutherans were somewhat more clamorous in their claims of victory, it is not to be supposed that Zwingli admitted their pretensions, or suppressed his own. This appears from some private letters, which he wrote soon after the conference, and of which the contents were not probably kept so secret as he professed to wish. In one of these he employed a bitter sarcasm against his antagonist: "The truth," he said, "has so manifestly triumphed, that if ever man was beaten it is Luther. This good besides has come of this affair: we have proved our agreement with him so clearly, on almost all the dogmas of Christianity, that the papists can no longer venture to hope that he will return to their party." Thus it was a ground of boast with Zwingli, that after long contending with the papists, if not under the banners, at least after the example, of the Saxon Reformer, he had so far outstripped him in courage or in honesty, as to have rescued him from the *suspicion* of treachery, and compromised him to a continuance of the conflict. It is not, however, that there was any danger lest Luther should desert the cause. His letters from Coburg, during the diet of Augsburg, abundantly prove his constancy; but thus much is clear, that, through the violence which he had lately displayed against the Sacramentarian party, and the nearer approximation of his doctrine to that of the church, an impression at that moment gained some prevalence, that he would have availed himself of any plausible pretext to return to his original communion.*

* Luther may have heard of that insinuation of Zwingli's when he wrote his letter to Jacob Probst, which began in the following

As both parties thus claimed the victory, so each was desirous to believe, or to have it believed, that the Landgrave was on his side. Justus Jonas, on the one hand, circulated a report that that prince had declared his adhesion to the literal interpretation, and his distrust in the subtle reasonings of man. Zwingle, on the other, in a letter to Vadianus, expressly asserted that Philip, together with his whole court, had embraced his doctrine. In the following August he dedicated to that prince a sermon "On Providence," preached before him at Marburg, and published at his desire; and addressed him as the only prince who had discovered, that infallibility belonged to God alone, and that affairs were not all to be regulated at the pleasure of any individual.

"You alone, not ignorant how the ministers of religion may be influenced by envy and hatred, or rather let me say error and vanity, are careful to prevent a body of disciples, who imitate the very defects of their master, from exciting open war between the churches. You alone are impressed with the principle that, when parties are agreed on the essentials of religion, a few differences on the rest ought not to interrupt their concord. You alone, however convinced and certain you are respecting that matter which others controvert with neither much courteousness nor much learning, profess, with a sort of holy dissimulation, that you fluctuate and are in doubt, to the end that, by associating with those in error, you

terms:—"Quod Sacramentarii jactant me Marpurgi victum, faciunt more suo. Sunt enim non solum mendaces, sed ipsum mendacium, fucus et simulatio; quod testatur Carolostadius et Cinglius ipsis factis et verbis suis. Vides enim hos Marpurgi revocasse in articulis positis ea quæ de Baptismo, Sacramentorum usu, similiter externo verbo, et alia quæ hactenus editis libris pestilenter docuerunt. Nos nihil revocamus."

may employ the influence of friendship and kindness to bring them to the truth."

Whatever the doctrine of the Landgrave may have been, these expressions reveal at least his policy. By the observance of a discreet neutrality, he believed that he might at length succeed, not perhaps in removing the difference, but in calming the passions of the opponents, and uniting them as brothers and confederates in support of the same great principles, and in furtherance of the same interests.

Meanwhile it is not questioned that the Zwinglians gained one respectable convert. Lambert, the principal theologian of Hesse, who was the hero of the conference of Homberg, and who has been mentioned with honour in the history of the Swiss Reformation, had constantly professed the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist. A few months after the disputation of Marburg he died; and from a confession, which he left behind him, it was clear that he had adopted the opposite opinion.

In the manner of conducting this debate, the praise of greater temper and courtesy is due to the Swiss. Luther himself, in numerous letters, makes mention of their moderation and obsequiousness; but the value which he set on those qualities appears from a short passage in his letter to Probst: "They demeaned themselves towards us with incredible humility and humanity, but all designedly, that they might seduce us into a false concord. Oh the craft of Satan! But Christ is wiser, and He hath preserved us!" A peaceful and conciliatory spirit, in a religious argument, between fellow Christians and fellow reformers, was, in Luther's eyes, a device and temptation of the devil! It is then no matter of surprise that he drew from the forbearance of his antagonists only fresh fuel for his own arrogance. But

he did not foresee that, within twelve months from that moment, his own adherents would be subjected to the same insults from an enemy still more imperious than himself—that Melancthon would bend at Augsburg with a flexibility to which Zwingli could never have condescended—and that the papal hierarchy, doubtless mistaking that lowliness for a Satanic stratagem, would reject and repudiate his submissions.

The parallel is faithful. Luther was the Pope of Marburg. By general acclamation the chief of the evangelical party, he assumed the character of a despot; and to sustain that part, in spiritual matters, it is necessary to create the prejudice of infallibility. If he once yielded any point of doctrine—if he once admitted that he had fallen into any error—the illusion would cease, and with it the authority which was founded on it. It was thus at least with the multitude. He was obliged, by the very position which he believed he occupied, or which he wished to occupy, to defend in the loftiest tone every tenet that he had once proclaimed to the people. Under the Roman Church all had been managed by authority: that removed, some other for the moment must be established in its place, and Luther assumed to be the substitute. Accordingly, he engaged in the combat with the same sort of determination which Campeggio brought with him to Augsburg; and had he possessed, like the other, the support of the secular power, he would not perhaps have altogether refrained from the use of it.

In regard to the peculiar tenet of Luther, it appears indeed to me to involve at least as deep a mystery as that of the Roman Church. The assertion “that the real substance of the Lord’s body and blood was in the bread and wine, together with that previous substance which was bread and wine only,” removed little of the

difficulty of transubstantiation, while it created another of no very explicable nature—namely, that the same substance is at the same time of two different and dissimilar kinds. This dogma required assuredly no scanty exercise of faith: besides it was new. Whether the positive invention of it may be ascribed to Luther or not—and I am inclined to think that it may—it had no known existence in the mind of any man at the time when he propounded it. Was it not then somewhat imperious in any one to prescribe it, as an essential article of faith, to the whole body of reformers, with the authority of a master—and in him especially, who had so lately emancipated them from a very similar authority, who had addressed them so eloquently on the “Liberty of a Christian,” who had restored them to the freedom of individual judgment, who had taught them that in religious matters conscience was the only infallible director, and that no earthly power had the right of interference with its decisions?

His intemperance too, in this controversy, belonged more to his own character than to the particular subject in dispute. His was a sort of middle doctrine; and being placed, as he thought, between the two extremes, it seemed to promise some moderation in its defenders. It receded from the change of substance, yet so as to preserve the real corporal presence. It eluded the astounding assertion: * that the substance of the Bread is become the substance of the Flesh: by advancing in its place: that the substance of the Flesh is united with the substance of the Bread, the latter remaining unchanged. This tenet derogated, as the papists believed, from the

* Of course I am aware of the metaphysical argument, or rather hypothesis, by which learned Roman Catholic divines explain away the great difficulty in their doctrine. I only speak of it here as it is understood by the great mass of Christians of all persuasions.

divinity of the Eucharistical elements. The Zwinglians, on their part, were astonished that the Reformer, who had ventured to make one step beyond the prescribed limits, should be so tremblingly reluctant to advance; and in fact distinguished very little between the opinion which he had adopted and that which he had forsaken: while Luther dealt his blows on either side, as suited the purpose of the moment, and condemned, with the same indignation, the superstition of the one party and the faithless obduracy of the other.

It is also objected to Luther, that it was he who first made the people parties in the dispute; that the Swiss would have continued to conduct it, as they began, in the Latin language, but that he and his adherents first issued their publications in German. Doubtless it had been more discreet, had both consented to argue amicably, and to veil a friendly difference in the obscurity of a learned tongue. But Luther never regarded the difference in that light; and as in his combats with the church he had made some of his most successful addresses to the uneducated classes, and as this was one of the foundations on which his whole work rested, and the principal instrument of its progress, so in the present case he naturally pursued the same course and appealed to the same tribunal. And, as the vulgar prejudice would probably declare in favour of the greater mystery, or at least of the more celebrated name, he may thus have served his cause. At any rate, he was consistent in this proceeding; nor can we censure it altogether, however we may regret that a more expansive charity did not conduct him to broader views and a wiser policy.

Upon the whole, he lost both influence and reputation by that controversy. By his imperious tone and elaborate sophistry he weakened the affection and respect of a large body of intelligent admirers. Many now began

to entertain a less exalted opinion of his talents, as well as of his candour. Instead of the self-devotion and magnanimity which had thrown such a lustre over his earlier struggles, a vain-glorious arrogance seemed to be master of his spirit; and for the indulgence of this ignoble passion, the mantle, which might have wrapped Germany and Switzerland in one continuous fold, was rent asunder. He was no longer the genius of the Reformation. Descending from that magnificent position, whence he had given light to the whole evangelical community, he was now become little more than the chief of a party; then indeed the more conspicuous and powerful section of the reformers, but destined in after times to undergo reverses and defections, which have confined the appellation of Lutheran to an inconsiderable proportion of the Protestant world.

END OF VOL. II.

